

Australian Music Vault celebrates Sammy Butcher, National Indigenous Music Awards Hall of Fame recipient



Photo supplied by Arts Centre Melbourne.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 18 SEPTEMBER 2024 – The Australian Music Vault at Arts Centre Melbourne has unveiled a new display honouring Warumpi Band founder **Sammy Butcher**, this year's recipient of the prestigious **National Indigenous Music Awards (NIMA) Hall of Fame Award**.

Featuring historical photos and album covers, the display showcases Butcher's extraordinary career and his enduring influence on the Australian music industry throughout his illustrious 40-year career. The new display serves as a testament to his remarkable talent and significant contribution to the Australian musical landscape as a founding member of the Warumpi Band, and through his commitment to inspiring younger generations to tell their stories through music.

This year marked the 20-year anniversary of the National Indigenous Music Awards (NIMAs), a significant milestone in acknowledging and celebrating Indigenous music. As the 2024 Hall of Fame inductee, Butcher joins an incredible line-up of artists including Archie Roach, Jimmy Little, Kutcha Edwards, Vic Simms and Roger Knox.

ABOUT SAMMY BUTCHER

Born Sammy Tjapanangka Butcher in Papunya, Northern Territory, Butcher is a proud Pitjantjatjara/Luritja/Warlpiri man. He co-founded the iconic Warumpi Band in the late 1970s alongside George Rurrumbu, Neil Murray and his brothers Gordon and Brian Butcher. Initially starting as a cover band, they soon transitioned to writing their own songs, including the groundbreaking 'Jailanguru Pakarnu (Out From Jail)' in 1983, which became the first rock song in an Aboriginal language.

The Warumpi Band released three albums, including the critically acclaimed *Big Name, No Blankets* (1985), *Go Bush!* (1987), and *Too Much Humbug* (1996). Their hit songs, such as 'Blackfella/Whitefella and My Island Home', resonated with audiences across the nation and beyond. The band's influence extended far beyond their music, inspiring a new generation of First Nations performers, including Yothu Yindi and Dan Sultan.

From 2000 Sammy's family responsibilities led him to settle back into life in Papunya where his focus shifted to the intergenerational transmission of music across the desert region. He began teaching the local children how to play guitar and helped establish several bands for young people, including The Little Orphan Band. Sammy went on to shape the musical journeys of many successful musicians and has dedicated his life to inspiring younger generations to tell their own stories through music.

Sammy Butcher's remarkable journey and his role in shaping the Australian music scene are explored in the documentary *Out of the Shadows* (2004). Additionally, his solo album *Desert Surf Guitar* (2003) pays homage to the breathtaking landscapes surrounding Papunya.

Recently, the Warumpi Band's legacy has been celebrated in the powerful theatre production *Big Name, No Blankets* by Ilbijerri Theatre Company. Written in collaboration with Sammy and co-directed by his daughter Anyupa Butcher, *Big Name, No Blankets* tells the story of the Warumpi Band, and how music can influence change and bring hope.

ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN MUSIC VAULT

The Australian Music Vault is a FREE exhibition and a key initiative of the Victorian Government's Music Works strategy, in support and collaboration with the music industry. It has been developed by Arts Centre Melbourne in consultation with the music industry and is a celebration of the Australian contemporary music story – past, present and future. It's a place to explore your love of music, revisit some of the big music moments of your life and discover the exciting new stories of today's Australian music scene.

Images can be found [here](#).

Australian Music Vault presents
Sammy Butcher – NIMA Hall of Fame display
FREE, Daily
For more information visit australianmusicvault.com.au

For more information about the Australian Music Vault please visit australianmusicvault.com.au or phone 1300 182 183. Become a fan of the Australian Music Vault on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

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