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## Planning Institute of Australia Congress 2025: Airport Development Group and Larrakia Nation Showcase Gurumbai Cultural Trail in Darwin

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) Congress 2025, Australia's premier planning event, was held in Darwin 28-30 May 2025 and a major highlight was the focus on the vital role of First Nations knowledge in shaping sustainable and inclusive futures. Airport Development Group (ADG) proudly partnered with Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation (LNAC) to showcase our signature environmental and cultural initiative, the Gurumbai Cultural Trail.

One of the Congress themes, *First Nations Knowledge and Planning*, recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first planners. It highlights the importance of integrating traditional knowledge and perspectives into modern planning systems to foster respect for Country, culture, and sustainable land management. ADG and Larrakia Nation's collaboration on the Gurumbai Cultural Trail exemplifies this vision.

The project celebrates Larrakia culture while delivering lasting environmental and community benefits. It also demonstrates capacity-building through Indigenous employment and training initiatives supported by ADG's Indigenous Engagement Strategy, including the Indigenous Training Academy, and tourism enhancement projects such as the Larrakia Welcome water tower and culturally significant public art.

Sandra de Kock, Executive General Manager, People, Culture and Community at Airport Development Group, said: *"We are honoured to collaborate with Larrakia Nation to bring the Gurumbai Cultural Trail to life. This partnership reflects our shared commitment to recognising and embedding First Nations' cultural heritage and environmental stewardship into the fabric of our infrastructure projects. The PIA Congress provides an important platform to highlight how Indigenous knowledge can reshape planning for a more inclusive, sustainable future. Together, we are demonstrating the powerful outcomes that come from respect, learning, and genuine partnership."*

*"One of the most powerful aspects of Congress is the opportunity to spotlight real-world projects that are leading the way in rethinking how we plan with Country,"* adds PIA National President Emma Riley RPIA (Fellow).

*"The Gurumbai Cultural Trail is an inspiring example of what's possible when planning practice is grounded in genuine partnership with Traditional Owners. We're thrilled to be able to partner with Larrakia Nation and ADG, and proud to feature this collaboration at Congress 2025. It demonstrates how our profession can actively support cultural recognition, community connection, and long-term sustainability."*

ADG continues to build on its foundation of Indigenous engagement through programs that promote education, employment, cultural appreciation, and tourism opportunities. The Gurumbai Cultural Trail stands as a testament to the strength of collaboration between one of Darwin's largest corporate infrastructure companies and Larrakia Nation.

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