



For Immediate Release

## What is discussed at the table doesn't stay at the table

**November 14, 2019** – These two reports were created by compiling key points and topics from each table discussion that occurred at Northern Policy Institute's 2017 and 2018 State of the North Conferences.

State of the North is an annual conference that explores how Northern leaders and policy experts can come together to find ways to grow and strengthen our Northern communities. The conferences featured a variety of speakers and panels. After each presentation, attendees were given an opportunity to participate in a series of table discussions which were recorded and compiled into final reports. NPI views the content of these discussions as an invaluable resource of information for both policymakers and researchers in Northern Ontario. The information also helps set NPI's research agenda.

### 2017 State of the North Conference - Timmins, ON

The theme of the conference was *Responding to Northern Ontario's Demographic Shift*, which involved discussion questions such as:

- If you were imagining the perfect immigration pilot program, what would it look like in Northern Ontario?
- What role does the broader community play in supporting immigration efforts?

"Northern Ontario needs to be promoted and marketed in a positive way that showcases more than just the outdoorsy lifestyle: lower cost of living, convenience of urban hubs, sense of community, and the vibrant social life," excerpt from a participant.

From the discussions, one of the key action items recommended by the author includes the following: "in order to appropriately attract and retain newcomers in Northern Ontario, foundational steps ought to be taken such as reducing silos and understanding the unique labour market needs of northern communities so as to fill gaps through a targeted approach."

### 2018 State of the North Conference - North Bay, ON

The theme of this conference was *Bold Approaches: Taxing for Growth*. The attendees were asked a variety of questions, including:

- To prove that things have changed, who should we compare ourselves to? Most participants affirmed that when assessing whether Northern Ontario is comparable or not, a certain level of cautiousness must be exerted as Northern Ontario has some unique characteristics which change the way comparisons are made.

- If you were asked to design an experimental tax policy for Northern Ontario, what would it look like?

Presenters spoke on the different possibilities of tax incentives and reinvestments, along with the risk and the rewards. Topics like taxation in Indigenous communities and the value of pilots and policy experimentation were also discussed.

2017 State of the North Conference Report: <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/2017-sotn-report>

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**About Northern Policy Institute:**

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.

**About the author:**

Alex Ross was born and raised in Sudbury, Ontario. After graduating from Laurentian University with a B.A. (Hons) in Economics in 2010, he completed a Masters Degree in Economic Policy from McMaster University. Alex joined NPI after working as a trust officer in the wealth management industry, and he has past non-profit experience as well as international work and travel experience in Thailand. Alex's areas of interest include labour market analysis, community and economic development, cost-benefit analysis, and environmental sustainability.

**About State of the North:**

State of the North is an annual conference that explores how northern leaders and policy experts can come together to find ways to grow and strengthen our Northern communities. More information about State of the North Conference here: <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/sotn2020>