



FIRST VOICE
Urban Indigenous Coalition

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two-Day Virtual Policy Conference to Focus on Truth and Reconciliation

Tuesday, November 3, 2020

St. John's, NL — First Voice is proud to announce that Decolonize YYT: Pathways to Reconciliation, a virtual policy conference, will take place on November 5-6, 2020. Organized in collaboration with Memorial University, the two-day event will explore opportunities to advance truth and reconciliation by decolonizing public services in St. John's and across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Decolonize YYT will include a series of four Policy in Focus sessions, which will bring together researchers, anti-racism practitioners, members of the urban Indigenous community, and representatives from all levels of government. The goal of each session will be to identify local strategies to address disparities in policy outcomes related to First Voice's four priority areas, including:

- Education, Training, and Employment;
- Health and Wellness;
- Housing and Homelessness; and
- Infrastructure and Service Delivery.

Each session will draw on recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

"Decolonize YYT is meant to spark discussions among participants that will directly inform the development of First Voice's forthcoming Community Action Plan," said Stacey Howse, Director of Programs with First Light. "Despite the challenges associated with organizing a conference during a public health emergency, we are determined to move forward with developing a long-term strategy to bring together community members, decision-makers, and other stakeholders to take urgent action on the issues that matter most to the urban Indigenous community."

In addition to the four Policy in Focus sessions, Decolonize YYT will also feature a series of public talks by Indigenous leaders and thinkers from Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada, which will be broadcast via livestream on First Voice's social media channels (@FirstVoiceNL). Jesse Thistle, a Métis-Cree Assistant Professor in the Department of

Humanities at York University and author of the best-selling memoir *From the Ashes*, will deliver the Keynote Address on the second day of the conference. A more detailed conference schedule, including a full list of speakers, is available online at firstvoicenl.ca/DecolonizeYYT.

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About First Voice

Launched in 2019 by First Light in collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada, First Voice is a coalition of Indigenous Peoples, service providers, and all levels of government working together to advance truth and reconciliation in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. Our work focuses on promoting and supporting local implementation of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).