Message on Lateral Violence

As a Nation, we came together to ask: What is Lateral Violence? How can we stop it?

We learned that it is violence that is directed at the people around us, instead of at our true adversaries. It includes many things: gossip, put downs, backstabbing, bullying, undermining, blaming, shaming.

We learned that Lateral Violence is a pattern of behaviour that comes from our experience of racism and oppression. It is not who we are. It is a way of surviving that we have learned, and it can be unlearned. It is not our fate.

We agreed that we all have the power to stop Lateral Violence. When we see or hear it, we will step in (as long as we feel safe). We will speak up and out about it, and we will not sweep cases under the rug. When a case comes forward, we will respond through a safe and fair process. We will listen to all parties with love and understanding.

We will replace Lateral Violence with Lateral Kindness. When someone does something good, we will say something about it. We will lift each other up, compliment each other, and give each other support. By doing this we will give our children the future they deserve.

The good news is that we have already seen a lot of progress. We have witnessed many positive changes in the way our citizens treat each other, and we are very proud of this.