



# Built Environment Culture of Appreciation, Respect and Empathy (BE CARE) Charter

Best Practices and Supplementary Guide





# Introduction to the BE CARE Charter

The Built Environment sector has long been characterised for its demanding work nature arising from the complex relationship among the various stakeholders within projects. Arising from the Taskforce for Architectural and Engineering Consultants, the Charter was developed to promote mindful principles that aims to improve working relationships between project parties and prioritise well-being. The Charter focuses on the following areas:

- Project parties' commitment
- Openness and respect
- Respecting rest periods
- Smart meetings and communications

The Charter has been published on [BCA's website](#) and is available for download. This supplementary guide provides examples of best practices for each of the key focus areas, as well as general implementation guidelines that project parties can adopt. Amendments to the Charter are generally permitted to suit specific project teams' needs. However, any changes should maintain fidelity to the Charter's fundamental principles and intended purposes – see *Dos and Don'ts* below.



- Amendments to the Charter should be accepted by all parties
- Changes should preserve the spirit and intent of the principles
- Instead of removing principles, rephrase to suit project needs



- Delete principles and/or sections entirely



If a firm chooses to adopt the Charter at the firm level, it may consider adjusting the language to better reflect a firm-wide application instead of a project-specific one.

# Best Practices in Implementing the Charter

## Project Parties' Commitment

Principles under the first pillar focuses on the project leadership's role in facilitating the implementation of the Charter. The success of the remaining three pillars depends on the leadership embracing their roles wholeheartedly.



| Principles                                                                                                                       | Examples to consider                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Drive forward actions and change necessary to support the Charter                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management or project leaders should avoid overcommitting their staff's time to other project parties without receiving their consent</li> <li>• Be confident in speaking out when there are unrealistic key performance indicators or milestones</li> </ul> |
| Promote a culture where people can speak up early about concerns on well-being                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a feedback channel for employees or project team members to raise concerns</li> <li>• Be understanding of employee's priorities outside of their working hours</li> <li>• Develop mental wellness efforts within the organisation</li> </ul>          |
| Schedule regular discussion on Project Parties' performance with respect to the Charter at appropriate project progress meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities for the management to meet to discuss well-being of employees</li> <li>• Acceleration of / Changes to the project schedule should be discussed with employee well-being in mind</li> </ul>                                            |
| Introduce and circulate the Charter to internal colleagues involved in the project                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print a copy of the Charter and frame it at the site and/or firm's office</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                         |

# Best Practices in Implementing the Charter

## Openness and Respect



### Principles

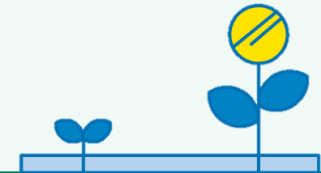
Treat all project stakeholders with appropriate level of respect and courtesy.

Maintain open channels for feedback while ensuring communication remains professional and constructive.

### Examples to consider

- Use professional language
- Listen actively to ideas and concerns
- Encourage two-way communication
- Set up regular check-ins or anonymous feedback mechanisms – see *Slide 6*

## Respecting Rest Periods



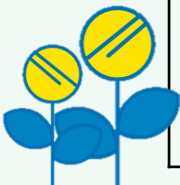
### Principles

Avoid contacting people outside their indicated working hours unless urgent, and when doing so, clearly state if immediate action is needed.

Respect colleagues' right to take annual leave without expecting them to check messages or be on call, while ensuring proper handover arrangements are in place and communicated to relevant project parties.

### Examples to consider

- Clearly mark urgent messages and specify response expectations
- Use scheduled emails or delayed messaging when possible
- Arrange proper handover plans before going on leave
- Inform relevant parties of covering officer during staff's absence
- Support a no-contact policy for employees on leave unless truly urgent



# Best Practices in Implementing the Charter

## Smart Meetings and Communication

| Principles                                                                                                                                                                                            | Examples to consider                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Be respectful of others' time by planning meetings properly (considering who needs to attend / giving appropriate notice / setting clear agendas and objectives) and avoid last minute cancellations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schedule meetings within working hours</li><li>• Invite only relevant participants to attend each meeting</li><li>• Share agenda and objectives at least 1-2 working days in advance</li></ul> |
| Run meetings effectively, including providing video / call-in options in meeting invites where suitable, enabling both physical and virtual participants to contribute in the discussion.             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage participation from both in-person and remote attendees</li><li>• Use tools (e.g. shared docs) to capture input from all participants</li></ul>                                       |
| Avoid copying people into messages that they don't need to receive.                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Double-check recipient lists before sending messages</li><li>• Use 'CC' only when someone needs to be informed and not to take action</li></ul>                                                |
| Understand people may not respond immediately for non-urgent matters, enabling periods for focused attention.                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage use of status indicators (e.g. Do Not Disturb)</li><li>• Prioritise tasks and communications based on urgency and importance</li></ul>                                               |



# Addressing Issues of Non-Adherence to the Charter

To ensure meaningful adoption of the Charter, it is important that individuals feel safe and supported when highlighting instances of non-adherence or unprofessional behaviour. To this end, the Charter implicitly includes a call-out mechanism, enabling individuals to raise concerns with the appropriate parties.

Firms and project teams have the flexibility to determine the implementation of the call-out mechanism. When feedback is received, firm or project leadership should assess the most appropriate course of action – either addressing the matter directly with the aggrieved party or escalate it for further review. Individuals or firms who have been ‘called out’ are encouraged to respond with openness and be given a fair opportunity to share their perspective. This fosters a culture of mutual respect, accountability and continuous improvement.

## Possible approaches

Aggrieved parties can provide feedback of project team member's unprofessional behaviour at project meetings; or  
Feedback could be provided to the relevant party's direct superior or management-level individual

## Suggested Charter Point-of-Contact (POC)

Project Director; and/or

Management-level representatives from each firm or developer

The call-out mechanism should be established prior to or at the project kickoff meeting.



Submit feedback on your BE  
CARE experience to BCA here!

Firms and project teams may use this deck to brief management and/or other stakeholders on the BE CARE Charter.

To allow BCA to track the adoption of the BE CARE Charter in firms and projects, please scan the QR code below.

