

INTER-AGENCY WORKING COMMITTEE

**A 3 –YEAR BLUEPRINT ON
SINGAPORE’S PUBLIC RESTROOMS**

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Executive Summary

1 Approximately 30,000 restroom blocks spanning across different sectors in Singapore came under scrutiny in this report.

2 When RAS launched the LOO (Let's Observe Ourselves) Campaign on 19th November 2008, World Toilet Day, it offered the media a vision of having at least 70% of the public restrooms in Singapore reach a basic standard of cleanliness by the end of 2010. Given the uphill challenge, RAS is extending its 2010 vision to 2013 with its 3-year blueprint. For this vision to materialize, Singapore's public restrooms require a huge overhaul with the support from everyone. The table below illustrates the time-table to achieve the 70% target in four key sectors:

Sector/Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	Channels	Quantification
Shopping centres	70%	75%	80%	90%	School and public education programme (Chapter 11)	Public surveys to be conducted in these 4 sectors
Schools	10%	25%	50%	75%		
F & B	10%	20%	50%	70%		
Others (i.e. government offices, market and food centres, MRT stations, parks & hospitals)	30%	50%	60%	70%		

3 Singapore's effort in branding itself as one of the most liveable cities in Asia is exemplary. We now have a world class infrastructure, a first class education system, and, an achievement of many 'firsts' such as, the world's first Formula 1 night race and, the Youth Olympic Games. Unfortunately, the cleanliness of our public restrooms has not been in tandem.

4 Public restrooms, hygiene practices, social etiquette, restroom cleaners' welfare and salaries, cleaning contracts and design specifications were researched and discussed at length by the three sub-committees of the Inter-Agency Working Committee (IAWC). Our findings and recommendations point to the critical need for changes in these areas. Besides the findings and recommendations, we have also included public survey results, and, newspaper forum opinions that demonstrate the necessity for measures to be taken. Forum opinions often draw our attention to the current state of our public restrooms. In **Annex B**, we have highlighted a few examples,

including sports facilities' restrooms, those that delegates from many countries would use. We have been given the honour of hosting a premier world class event, the Youth Olympic Games (YOG). But, the meticulous planning involved in staging this event may be overshadowed by the state of the restrooms. This also extends to our food outlets that may be patronized by these people.

5 Public restrooms have plenty to do to improve in terms of design and hardware. At the same time, our 'software' - the owners and cleaners of restrooms, the vital cogs that wheel out the provision of good service - are not up to task. Our 'heart ware', the users, is the measure of our country's social graciousness. When our three different wares are incorrectly presented to an international audience, tourists leave our shores shocked that not all precinct as it appears to be.

6 Public hygiene and health have become an area of concern given global pandemics such as the H1N1 and, Hand Foot and Mouth Disease. Addressing the health risks posed by dirty public restrooms would help to considerably contain the spread of such diseases and safeguard our citizens. A unified set of practices across all industries would serve to ensure that our public restrooms are fit for use.

7 Through a series of meetings over a period of 12 months, the content of this report clearly identifies the short comings, and, proposes measures to improve the situation. For owners & operators, the costs of employing better services and more cost effective ways of ensuring standards are discussed and recommended. Tackling persistent problems of vandalism, and outsourcing better service providers are some of the recommendations proposed. Better wages and welfare conditions for cleaners, developing more trained cleaners and looking into employment opportunities summarizes what the cleaners & contractors sub-committee has proposed. As for the users' sub-committee, reaching out to different public sector groups, using more effective ways of educating youth groups, and, offering recognition to owners and cleaners form the main components of their recommendations. All the key findings and recommendations of the sub-committees are listed in page 3.

8 We submit this report to your office for consideration with the confidence that the agencies under your stewardship will give it its due attention. For our recommendations to work, your support and endorsement would go a long way to unlocking the necessary doors and cause a re-think to previously held views regarding our public restrooms.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations of the Three Sub- Committees

Sub-Committee 1- Owners & Operators

1. Restroom Cleanliness and Maintenance

Findings	Recommendations
a. Inadequate or improper restroom cleaning by small owners and operators. E.g. coffee shops as they are more resistant to hire a trained restroom cleaner due to high costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ A cost-effective way of restroom cleaning and maintenance such as Shared cleaning services➤ Subsidies for restroom cleaning courses➤ Charges for restroom visits
b. Challenges of maintaining restroom cleanliness are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">> High usage> Poor restroom etiquette> Vandalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Public education➤ Authority➤ Regular deployment➤ Charge restroom users➤ Coin-operated paper dispenser*
c. Old restrooms without renovation are more difficult to maintain and thus dirtier	Re-launch of the toilet upgrading programme (TUP) to encourage owners to renovate their old restrooms*

**Refer to page 6 of the Comments from Government Agencies on Specific Recommendations*

2. Restroom Design

Findings	Recommendations
a. The need for better restroom design as this can help to improve users' behaviour such as brighter colours and lighting	A joint collaboration on a new guidebook to better restroom design between relevant parties*
b. Inadequate provision of restrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Restrooms to be excluded Gross Floor Area (GFA) or granting additional GFA to owners and operators*➤ Build a restroom complex

**Refer to page 7 of the Comments from Government Agencies on Specific Recommendations*

3. Restroom Standards and the Happy Toilet Programme (HTP)

Findings	Recommendations
a. Confusions over the Singapore's OK (SOK) Public Toilet and Happy Toilet Programme (HTP)	A common basic standard for restrooms i.e. merging Singapore's OK Toilet label and Happy Toilet Programme*
b. Low HTP participation due to costs incurred for higher and sustainable standards of HTP restrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Charges applicable for SOK participation which is currently free ➤ Incentives for HTP participation
c. The need for a list of trusted cleaning contractors	An accreditation scheme for the cleaning industry

**Refer to page 8 of the Comments from Government Agencies on Specific Recommendations*

Sub-Committee 2 – Cleaners & Contractors

1. Accreditation scheme for the cleaning industry

Findings	Recommendations
Lack of performance standards for restroom cleaners in private and public sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop performance-based standards for cleaning services ➤ Develop model contracts for cleaners ➤ Develop an accreditation scheme for the cleaning industry*

**Refer to page 8 of the Comments from Government Agencies on Specific Recommendations*

2. Training programme

Findings	Recommendations
Lack of skilled manpower in restroom cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increasing supply of restroom cleaners ➤ Improve welfare of restroom cleaners ➤ Upgrading of restroom cleaners*

**Refer to page 9 of the Comments from Government Agencies on Specific Recommendations*

3. Grow local cleaning companies

Findings	Recommendations
Lack of funds stunt the growth of small cleaning companies	Grow local cleaning companies:- Improve the business environment

Sub-Committee 3 - Users

1. Education

Findings	Recommendations
Old habits and practices = ungracious behaviour and inconsiderate users	Public awareness campaigns and forum talks
Getting across to all groups of individuals is challenging	Customized talks and workshops for target specific groups
Some education programmes are outdated or unknown to the public	Update current education programmes and share information between agencies
Revamp of the education programme to cover all areas	Cleaners' standards and restroom design part of new holistic approach

2. Awareness

Findings	Recommendations
More awareness is needed to improve conditions of restrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Harnessing the media, getting them actively involved and using them to announce improvements ➤ Using popular forms of new media to change perceptions of restrooms.
The public is unaware of where clean restrooms are in Singapore	Create a map or directory to inform the public – The LOO Map
Youth groups need to be more involved	Youth groups and young adults to be trained to participate in awareness and education initiatives.

3. Recognition

Findings	Recommendations
Not enough recognition is given to contractors, cleaners and owners of restrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a nation-wide awards ceremony – LOO Awards ➤ Introduction of a Cleaners' Day ➤ A registry of contractors
To establish and recognize schools with 'Model Students' and offer credible examples to other schools.	The 'Model Restrooms @ Schools' project to be initiated at selected schools to be the benchmark

Comments from Government Agencies on Specific Recommendations

Sub-Committee 1- Owners & Operators

Page/ Item	Recommendation in report	Comments
15 (Item 12)	Provision of coin-operated toilet paper dispensers to minimise misuse of toilet paper.	<p>Toilet paper should be provided in each cubicle in public toilets to ensure that toilet paper is available readily when required for use by the toilet user and help to prevent the toilets from getting dirtied.</p> <p>NEA is not in favour of the provision of coin-operated toilet paper dispensers, as this may mean that the toilet paper would not be readily available for users should they not have the required coins and thus could lead to toilets being dirtied.</p> <p>The provision of jumbo toilet paper dispensers at common passageways may be allowed, only if vandalism is not a problem. Operators should ensure that clear signs are displayed at these toilet entrances so that the users are informed before entering.</p> <p>Toilet owners/operators may impose a fee for the use of the toilet if cost is an issue.</p>
16 (Item 16)	Re-launch of TUP to encourage owners to renovate their old restrooms	<p>Maintenance is the key to keeping toilets clean, and TUP is not a sustainable solution. NEA has observed from a public toilet survey that the overall cleanliness of toilets that have undergone TUP was not significantly better than non-TUP toilets. In addition, during the last round of TUP, the response of operators had been lukewarm. Therefore, NEA's view is that stepping up enforcement would be a more effective approach to improve cleanliness of the public toilets.</p> <p>Since 1 Apr 10, there has been an increase in penalties for hygiene offences including poorly maintained toilets. The extension of the Point Demerit System to coffeeshops, foodcourts and canteens in Nov 10 would also help to</p>

		<p>encourage the operators to place more emphasis on cleanliness of the premises, including toilets. For toilets with appliances / facilities that are in disrepair, NEA will require the toilet owners to replace them.</p> <p>Business owners, in upgrading their premises, should see the toilets as facilities that would affect the overall experience of customers who visit their premises, and include them in their renovation plans as required.</p>
17 (Item 4)	Review of “Guidebook for better public toilet design and maintenance” with NEA and BCA	We would be happy to work with RAS to review the contents and the methods of guidebook distribution to various stakeholders.
17 (Item 5)	Restrooms to be excluded Gross Floor Area (GFA) or granting additional GFA to owners and operators	<p>GFA exemptions are granted only selectively to achieve certain planning objectives such as covered walkways for safe and weather protected pedestrian movement between buildings and to public transport nodes, covered spaces for community interaction.</p> <p>Any building will need to be properly designed to meet the needs of the occupant, the general public as well as meet the requirements of government agencies. For example, sub-station, bin centre, fire escape staircase, mechanical and engineering equipment rooms and household shelter will need to be provided to ensure the proper functioning of a building. Though these spaces are required by other government agencies, they are considered GFA as they contribute towards the physical bulk of a development. Similarly, public toilets that cater for the convenience of the public, form part of the basic facility of a development and are counted as GFA. Over the years, URA has received many requests for GFA exemptions e.g. for provision of household shelters, info-comm facilities, family friendly facilities etc. We have consistently maintained that these spaces (whether mandatory or voluntarily</p>

		<p>provided) as GFA since they form part of the building intensity and bulk. While we support RAS's objectives to encourage better designed and provision of public toilets, we are not able to agree to exempt public toilets from GFA as this would undermine the effectiveness of GFA as a planning tool.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of building owners to ensure that their buildings are pleasant and attractive by providing with necessary facilities and amenities to the public. Pleasant and attractive buildings will also translate to higher rentals and values for the owners.</p>
19 (Item 4)	Merging of SOK toilet label and Happy Toilet Programme to avoid confusion over SOK and HTP	The SOK campaign, including the SOK toilet label, will be discontinued by the end of the year. The Public Hygiene Council has been formed to review and coordinate effort to sustain high hygiene standards. With this, there shall be no more confusion over SOK and HTP. NEA will work with RAS to further promote HTP.

Sub-Committee 2 – Cleaners & Contractors

Page/ Item	Recommendation in report	Comments
27 (Item 3-5)	Accreditation scheme for cleaning companies	There are two Singapore Standards established by Spring Singapore which briefly cover toilets: the SS 499 (Cleaning Service Industry – Cleaning performance for commercial premises) and SS 533 (Cleaning performance for public housing estates). The Singapore Standards have certain criteria for cleaning performance for commercial buildings and public housing. The Environmental Cleaning Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) is based on these standards. In addition, when town councils engage cleaning contractors in public housing estates, contractors must abide by Singapore Standards.

		<p>NEA has rolled out the pilot voluntary accreditation scheme for the cleaning industry in July 2010 for a period of 1 year. The scheme aims to raise the cleaning standards and upgrade the professionalism and productivity of the industry; give recognition to companies that have put in place operating systems to ensure the provision of quality cleaning services by a professional cleaning workforce; and allows service buyers to differentiate the quality of cleaning companies before engaging them.</p> <p>Cleaning companies will be assessed on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Whether they meet professional and regulatory cleaning standards; ii. Whether they meet environmental health and cleanliness standards; iii. Their operation planning, support and delivery; and iv. Their training, quality of manpower and general working conditions. <p>There are two levels of award under the Scheme, namely Clean Mark Silver and Clean Mark Gold. Companies can apply for either Clean Mark Silver or Clean Mark Gold award depending on the company's ability to fulfil the different sets of accreditation criteria. The accreditation award is currently valid for 1 year and shall be renewed upon annual re-assessment.</p>
32 (Item 12-13)	Training programmes for restroom cleaners for skills upgrading and productivity boosting	<p>The Environmental Cleaning Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) is a national credentialing system developed by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) together with the industry and agencies. The Environmental Cleaning WSQ is a structured programme that is made up of flexible, bite-sized training courses specific to the cleaning industry. Environmental Cleaning WSQ equips workers with skills to improve work performance and facilitates career</p>

		<p>advancement through clear progression pathways. The framework was officially launched on 21 July 2010.</p> <p>The Environmental Cleaning WSQ framework consists of 3 levels: Certificate, Higher Certificate and Advanced Certificate. Employers may also encourage their workers to start off with a training bundle “Certified Cleaning Crew” that consists of 2 Core and 2 Elective modules from the Certificate) and they may continue to complete the full certificate later. WDA currently provides up to 90% funding for Environmental Cleaning WSQ courses for Singaporeans and Singapore PRs. Under the Workfare Training Support (WTS) scheme, course fee funding is provided at up to 95% for eligible Singapore Citizen workers. There is currently no funding available for foreign workers.</p> <p>The Environmental Cleaning WSQ training requirement is also included as a key criterion in NEA’s Voluntary Accreditation Scheme.</p>
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Owners & Operators Sub-Committee

*Mission Statement: Quality Service Providers
Offering Quality Restrooms*

Owners & Operators Sub-Committee Members

- Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (Observer)
- Housing and Development Board
- JTC Corporation
- Kheng Keow Coffee Merchants Restaurant and Bar-Owners Association
- Koufu Pte Ltd
- Land Transport Authority
- National Environment Agency
- National Parks Board
- NTUC Foodfare Co-operative Ltd
- PUB, The National Water Agency
- SBS Transit Ltd
- Singapore Foochow Coffee Restaurant and Bar Merchants Association
- Singapore Institute of Architects
- Singapore Sports Council
- SMRT Corporation Ltd.
- Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre

Chapter 1: Restroom Cleanliness and Maintenance

Introduction

1 The cleanliness of public restrooms¹ has been a challenge for its owners and operators. According to the National Environment Agency (NEA), restrooms in following places are classified as public restrooms:

- Shopping malls or centres, including the floor in commercial buildings with shops;
- Supermarkets and wet markets;
- Eating establishments and food centres (restaurants, coffee shops, hawker centres, food courts)/ bars/ nightclubs/ discotheques/ pubs;
- Conference halls/ cinemas/ theatres;
- Parks/ tourist sites;
- Bus terminals/ interchanges;
- Petrol stations;
- Community centres/ clubs;
- Exhibition halls/ convention halls;
- MRT stations;
- Stadiums; and
- Public swimming pools

2 A public survey (**Annex C**) conducted in 2009 by RAS on 133 respondents revealed that only 36.1% rated the cleanliness of public restrooms (all “toilet” or “restroom” related words hereinafter referred to as “public restrooms”) as good² and a majority of 46.6% rated it as normal³. According to them, the dirtiest restrooms were found at coffee shops (26.1%), market and food centres (18.5%), bus terminals and interchanges (13.4%), MRT stations (10.6%), parks (9.4%) and food courts (9.1%).

¹ According to the National Environment Agency (NEA), a public toilet is defined as a toilet that the general public has free access, regardless of payment/ non-payment to access the premises. The general public is free to access the public toilet without having to be a resident, student, staff, member or a guest, or a regular client.

² In the survey, the definition of “good” is clean with basic facilities and amenities such as toilet paper and hand soap.

³ In the survey, the definition of “normal” is acceptable but no amenities such as toilet paper and hand soap.

Three key Reasons for Dirty Public Restrooms

3 According to the owners and operators, the three key reasons for dirty public restrooms are:

- Inadequate or improper restroom cleaning;
- Challenges of maintaining restroom cleanliness; and
- Old restrooms that have not undergone renovation

Inadequate or Improper Restroom Cleaning

4 Due to the high costs of maintenance, and, no source of revenue (i.e. for not charging restroom visits), small owners and operators such as coffee shop owners are more resistant to hiring trained restroom cleaners⁴ (**Chapter 6**). Coffee shop restrooms are normally cleaned by cleaners who also serve beverages and wash dishes. Without proper restroom cleaning equipment (**Annex D**) and trained restroom cleaners, the restrooms are not adequately cleansed.

5 As small owners and operators are more concerned with the high costs of employing trained restroom cleaners, a cost-effective way of restroom cleaning and maintenance such as shared restroom cleaning services may be welcomed by them. Two to four owners and operators can outsource all their cleaning services to a single cleaning contractor and share the costs together. They will have to specify in their contract that the successful cleaning contractor has to provide at least one trained restroom cleaner to maintain all the restrooms.

6 The second option is to extend the subsidies for restroom cleaning courses to cheap foreign workers who appeal to small owners and operators. Currently, only locals are entitled to subsidies for restroom cleaning courses, and many foreigners employed by the cleaning contractors are not properly trained. Providing subsidies for these workers will encourage cleaning contractors to send them for courses (**Chapter 6**).

7 The third option is to start charging for restroom visits to generate revenue for owners/operators to hire trained restroom cleaners. If they are afraid that this would result in complaints or even loss of businesses because other small owners and operators may not be charging, they can implement a voucher or card system. For the voucher system, when patrons pay for restroom visits, a redeemable voucher is issued to the patron to pay for the products and services. For example, when a patron pays \$0.10 for a restroom visit at a coffee shop, he or she will be given a voucher with a discount of \$0.10 for a minimum of \$3 spend in purchasing beverages. Another alternative is the card system whereby a patron is given a card with a few empty slots and a stamp will be given for every paid restroom visit. When all the empty slots are stamped, the patron is entitled to redemption. In the case of a coffee shop, the redemption can be a can of drink. The above-mentioned examples not only address the

⁴ Trained toilet cleaner refers to toilet cleaner trained under the National Skills Recognition System Course (NSRS) and/or Restroom Specialist Training Course (RSTC)

concerns on the source of revenue, but, also act to improve the businesses of small owners and operators.

Challenges of Maintaining Restroom Cleanliness

8 Owners and operators face the challenges of maintaining public restroom cleanliness. The three key challenges of maintaining restroom cleanliness:

- Vandalism
- Poor restroom etiquette or behaviour
- High traffic

9 According to the earlier-mentioned survey (**Annex C**), a majority of 72.5% attributed the cause of dirty public restrooms to irresponsible users. Therefore, there is a pressing need for public education (**Chapter 8 and 9**).

10 Apart from public education, warning, and fining irresponsible users will also serve as a deterrent against vandalism and poor public restroom etiquette. Common acts of vandalism and poor etiquette include removal of coat hooks, graffiti, cigarette burnt marks, misuse or wastage of toilet paper. However, the challenge is to identify the irresponsible users. The installation of web-cams even in the general washing area is against the law (intruding of privacy). Therefore, granting authority to toilet cleaners to remind, warn or fine irresponsible users is a better alternative act as deterrence. Similar to the concept of SMRT train inspectors who warn and fine commuters consuming food and beverages in trains, restroom cleaners can also act as inspectors to remind, warn and fine irresponsible users.

11 Regular and even permanent deployment of restroom cleaners at the restroom entrances during peak hours will help to address the high traffic problem. Owners and operators can charge restroom users during peak hours so as to defray the manpower cost of regularly or permanently deploying toilet cleaners at the entrances. As the definition of peak hours from business to business, owners and operators should define their own peak hours.

12 The misuse of toilet paper can be countered with the provision of coin-operated toilet paper dispensers. When users have to pay for toilet paper usage, they will not misuse it. An ITE institution also launched an EZ-link card-operated toilet paper dispenser to discourage toilet paper wastage. This is a good initiative especially for restrooms at MRT stations. Commuters can easily tap their EZ-link card to pay for toilet paper. Another alternative is the provision of a jumbo toilet paper dispenser at the passageway instead of having it inside the toilet cubicles which also means toilet cleaners can monitor on any wastage.

Old Restrooms that Have Not Undergone Renovation

13 Due to old sanitary fitting and plumbing, older restrooms that have not undergone any renovation are dirtier, difficult to maintain, or clean. A restroom should ideally be renovated every five years.

14 On 18 July 2002, NEA launched a \$4 million Toilet Upgrading Programme (TUP) to help spruce up the old restrooms in coffee shops. In TUP, NEA paid half the costs of upgrading the restrooms, capped at \$5,000 per coffee shop. The one-year scheme was voluntary.

15 TUP was extended for another year until 31 December 2004 to enable more coffee shop owners to benefit from the programme. The programme was opened to some 800 coffee shops in HDB estates and 550 in pre-war shop houses. 476 coffee shops participated in TUP with another 329 coffee shops owners upgrading their restrooms at their own expense. 805 or 79.7% of restrooms in coffee shops were upgraded in 2004. The upgrading not only benefited users, but also made the restrooms easier to maintain.

16 The TUP has since ceased for almost five years and it is now timely to re-launch it. NEA may also wish to provide a longer time-frame to allow more flexibility for owners and operators with old restrooms to apply for TUP anytime.

17 The revised TUP should focus not solely on providing funding but on the commitment of the owners and operators i.e. the eligibility for the TUP should include recruitment of a trained restroom cleaner, provision of proper cleaning equipment, cleaning schedule, basic amenities such as soap and toilet paper, better sanitary ware such as sensor taps, etc. The amount of funding should be made flexible instead of previously co-paying 50% of toilet upgrading costs subject to a cap of \$5,000. Owners and operators will apply and NEA will evaluate and propose the capped amount. Owners and operators with more commitment should be granted more funding.

Chapter 2: Restroom Designs

Introduction

1 The designs of restrooms also play an important part in their cleanliness and maintenance. The restroom needs differ by gender, age, and physical abilities (i.e. handicapped people). Furthermore, ethnic and cultural needs also have to be addressed. Therefore, restrooms poorly designed restrooms can affect their cleanliness.

The need for better Restroom Design

2 With a re-launch of TUP, there is also a need for better restroom designs so as to improve users' behaviour such as having brighter colours and lightings. The first "Guidebook for Better Public Toilet Design and Maintenance" was published in 1999. As an ongoing effort to update the knowledge base on the subject, the second edition by NEA, in collaboration with RAS, was published in 2004 that covered topics on design, maintenance and user education.

3 Design of restrooms comprises of layout, lighting, materials, urinals, water closets, wash basins, ventilation system and landscaping, amongst others. Maintenance of restrooms comprises of sequence of cleaning, frequency of cleaning, basic equipment and supplies, correct use of cleaning agents, mechanical ventilation system, training of restroom cleaners, and, performance-based contracts.

4 After five years since the last publication, there is a need to review the guidebook again to incorporate more specifications to cater to a diversified group of owners and operators. The collaboration can include NEA, RAS and the Building and Construction Authority (BCA).

Inadequate Provision of Restrooms

5 The provision of restrooms at locations such as shopping centres, train stations, bus interchanges/terminals and parks to meet the high traffic during peak hours is inadequate. As restrooms are not exempted from the Gross Floor Area⁵ (GFA) computation, owners and operators are less incentivised to provide adequate restrooms. GFA exemptions are granted selectively to achieve certain planning objectives such as covered walkways for safe and weather protected pedestrian movement between buildings and to public transport nodes, and, covered spaces for community interaction.

⁵ According to the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), Gross Floor Area (GFA) refers to any covered floor areas of a building (including ancillary supporting areas like circulation space, lobby area, restrooms) and all uncovered areas used for commercial purposes, except areas specifically exempted from GFA computation. GFA is a planning tool used by URA to measure and regulate the intensity and building bulk of developments. It is also used by many other government agencies to plan for the provision of public infrastructure and services (e.g. schools, hospitals, public parks and other community facilities) within an area.

6 All buildings need to be properly designed to meet the needs of their occupants, and, the specific guidelines of the various government agencies. For example, substations, bin centres, fire escape staircases, mechanical and engineering equipment rooms and household shelters need to be provided to ensure the proper functioning of a building. These areas are considered GFA as they contribute towards the physical bulk of a development. Similarly, public restrooms that cater for the convenience of the public form part of the basic facility of a development and are counted as GFA. Instead of having GFA exemptions for restrooms, the government may consider granting additional GFA to owners and operators when they provide more restrooms.

7 Another alternative to address the inadequate provision of restrooms is to adopt the concept of a 'restroom complex', which is similar to a car park complex. A restroom complex can be built in a high human traffic area to commercialize the provision of restrooms. The complex owner can work out different charges for different timings should the restroom complex be operated for 24 hours. This will also resolve restroom inaccessibility in areas such as Orchard Road after normal operating hours i.e. 10pm when most shopping centres are closed. The inaccessibility to restrooms has also resulted in public urinating (**Annex E**). The government may consider setting aside areas for the construction of such complexes.

Chapter 3: Restroom Standards and the Happy Toilet Programme

Introduction

1 The standards of restrooms serve as a criterion to determine if owners and operators are following guidelines and requirements. To encourage proper usage and promote good public health habits, NEA published an advisory on its website. The advisory covers the provision of adequate restroom facilities and proper restroom cleaning/ maintenance, including frequency of cleaning, periodic cleaning schedule, equipment and supplies list for cleaners, and, cleaning agents for different finishes.

2 Currently, there are two accreditation schemes for the restrooms in Singapore. The Singapore's OK (SOK) Public Toilet⁶ by NEA and the Happy Toilet Programme⁷ (HTP) by RAS. The two initiatives were launched to promote and enhance the standards of restrooms. The schemes serve to boost public confidence in the cleanliness of the public restrooms.

Confusions over the Two Accreditation Schemes

3 There is confusion over the (SOK) Toilet and HTP schemes amongst some owners and operators. The criteria for SOK Toilet⁸ and the HTP 3-Star Toilet⁹ are similar. The only exception is that for 3-Star Toilet assessed for effectiveness such as prominent entrance signage, sensor/ manual taps, sensor flushing system, etc. and user satisfaction ratings via on-the-spot interviews.

4 A common basic standard for restrooms is necessary to clear the confusion. One suggestion is to integrate the standards of SOK and HTP 3-star Toilet into one since both standards are similar, with HTP adopting a higher standard. The current SOK and HTP 3-star Toilet are the minimum standards of a public restroom. However, there is a need for higher standards, not only to highlight to the users on the differences in standards, but also, to encourage owners and operators to provide clean and well-maintained restrooms.

⁶ The Singapore's OK (SOK) Public Toilet is a voluntary scheme to reinforce the commitment of stakeholders to raise the standards of toilet hygiene. SOK Toilet labels will be given out for display at public restrooms that meet certain cleanliness and hygiene standards. SOK Campaign was first launched in May 2003 and re-launched in May 2009 as part of Singapore's continued vigilance against the spread of infectious diseases.

⁷ The Happy Toilet Programme (HTP) is a voluntary scheme launched in July 2003 to award public restrooms a three, four or five star rating for their standards and excellence. HTP certificates and plaques are given out for display at public restrooms that meet HTP standards. It was revamped in November 2008 to include effectiveness and satisfaction on top of its existing three main criteria namely cleanliness, maintenance and design.

⁸ The criteria for SOK restrooms are all sanitary pipes and fittings in good working condition, display of cleaning schedule prominently with a contact number to report lapses, provision of soap, toilet paper, working hand-dryer/paper towels, litter bin, sanitary bin for female toilet and a cleaner during peak hours.

⁹ The criteria for HTP 3-Star restrooms include SOK restrooms plus effectiveness and user satisfaction.

Higher and Sustainable Standards of HTP Toilet over SOK Toilet

5 The HTP works on the concept of positive branding for the owners and operators by awarding a higher 4-star¹⁰ and 5-star¹¹ ratings for excellent and premium restrooms respectively. The positive branding for the owners and operators will also signify a positive branding of Singapore as a clean, green and liveable city. For example, the Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) has committed to achieve HTP 5-star rating for all their restrooms at the Jurong Bird Park, Night Safari and Singapore Zoo not only as a positive branding for their tourist attractions, but also, portraying a positive image of Singapore to tourists.

6 The HTP also works on sustaining standards for public restrooms by renewing the ratings every year by conducting at least one mystery audit during the validity period. Public restrooms that no longer meet the HTP criteria will be reported to the owners and operators and specific defects will be highlighted to them for their remedial actions. The HTP helps to heighten the commitment of the owners and operators by requesting them to first conduct a self-assessment of their restrooms using the HTP Self-assessment Checklist (**Annex F**) before the actual assessment by RAS. The self-assessment checklist is an assurance of at least a HTP 3-star rating when all the criteria are met.

Low HTP Participation

7 The HTP is chargeable to cover manpower and administration costs. The HTP fee was revised in 2008 to replace the old flat fee of \$100 or \$80 (more than 10 restrooms located within same building or radius of 1 km) per restroom. This flexible fee system looks into the number of units such as number of restroom cubicles, urinals, etc. to be assessed, which means small restroom owners such as coffee shop owners will pay a lower fee ranging from \$71 per toilet. Big owners and operators with more restrooms will enjoy a flat fee of \$100 (i.e. 20 to 39 restrooms) or \$80 (i.e. 40 restrooms and above) per restroom. Owners and operators can also look forward to better rates when they opt to participate in HTP for three consecutive years.

8 Despite having a comprehensive accreditation and flexible fee system for restrooms, participation rate for HTP has been low. As of October 2009, there were only about 400 HTP Toilets (i.e. Happy Toilet since the launch of LOO Campaign¹² in November 2008). The main reason, we feel, is due to a chargeable fee for HTP as

¹⁰ The criteria for HTP 4-Star restrooms are all the above-mentioned criteria for HTP 3-Star restrooms plus special delights and user-friendly facilities such as the provision of diaper changing station, nursing room, WC/ urinal for children, artwork/ ornaments, etc.

¹¹ The criteria for HTP 5-Star restrooms are all the above-mentioned criteria for HTP 4-Star restrooms plus eco-friendly facilities such as natural lighting, sensor lighting, water-saving features, etc.

¹² The LOO – Let's observe ourselves - Campaign was launched on 19 November 2008 in conjunction with World Toilet Day. This campaign targets the toilet owners, cleaners and users with the aim to achieve the 2010 goal of 70% clean public restrooms island wide, to meet HTP 3-star rating which is the basic standard of toilet cleanliness.

compared to SOK, which is free. Hence, a common accreditation scheme will help resolve this issue.

Incentives for HTP Participation

9 An option to boost HTP participation is government subsidies as an incentive for owners and operators who participate in HTP. One of them can be mandatory HTP participation for owners and operators who apply for the TUP.

10 Another option is the inclusion of HTP as one of the criteria and scoring system of the BCA Green Mark Scheme¹³. Currently, the assessment criteria of the scheme cover the following key areas:

- Energy Efficiency
- Water Efficiency
- Environmental Protection
- Indoor Environmental Quality
- Other Green Features and Innovation

11 As one of the criteria for HTP 5-star toilet is the availability of eco-friendly facilities such as natural lighting, sensor lighting and water-saving features which fit well under the above-mentioned key areas of energy and water efficiency, BCA may wish to consider including HTP 5-star toilet as one of the criteria and scoring system for their scheme.

Accreditation scheme for the cleaning industry

12 The cleaning industry also plays an important role in the standards of restrooms. Therefore there is a need to devise an accreditation scheme for the cleaning industry (**Chapter 5**) such as a list of trusted cleaning contractors.

¹³ The BCA Green Mark Scheme was launched in January 2005 as an initiative to drive Singapore's construction industry towards more environment-friendly buildings. It is intended to promote sustainability in the built environment and raise environmental awareness among developers, designers and builders when they start project conceptualisation and design, as well as during construction.

Cleaners & Contractors Sub-Committee

*Mission Statement: Dedicated Professionals
Employing Best Practices*

Cleaners & Contractors Sub-Committee Members

- Ang Mo Kio-Yio Chu Kang Town Council
- Environmental Management Association of Singapore
- Hong Kah Town Council
- Initial Hygiene
- Jalan Besar Town Council
- National Environment Agency
- Workforce Development Agency
- World Toilet College

Chapter 4: Sanitation and Cleanliness

Introduction

1 The provision of adequate sanitation facilities and a clean environment are vital to improve the health of Singaporeans. If they are not taken care of in a safe way, our human waste can pollute the environment and cause serious health problems, such as diarrhoea, worms, cholera and bladder infections.

2 Many of these health problems can be prevented through:

- Personal cleanliness (hygiene) where individuals practice good hand washing and restroom habits
- Public cleanliness (sanitation) where restroom cleaners are tasked with providing clean and safe restrooms and disposing of human waste safely.

3 Cleaners play a critical role in our daily lives but are often unappreciated. This committee worked with partners in the public and private sectors to look into improving the jobs and livelihood of restroom cleaners by ensuring that they receive fair wage, undergo training to move up the job value chain; and, work in clean and safe environments.

4 In some settings, cleaners are called housekeeping staff or maintenance staff. Other names include:

- Custodial Services Supervisor
- Guest Service Associate
- Environmental Services Associate

What do Cleaners Clean?

5 Typical cleaning often consists of the following tasks:

- Cleaning bathrooms;
- Sinks;
- Restrooms;
- Urinals;
- Cleaning floors;
- Cleaning carpets;
- Cleaning stainless steel and other special surfaces;
- Clearing tables in lunch room;
- Emptying trash and recycling bin;
- Locking and unlocking buildings at the beginning and end of the day; and
- Stripping and waxing floors

What do Restroom Cleaners Clean?

6 Typical restroom cleaning consists:

- Refilling toilet tissue and other dispensers;
- Emptying rest room trash;
- Cleaning and disinfecting all fixtures, mirrors and drinking fountains;
- Spot cleaning and disinfecting partitions and doors; and
- Sweeping and mopping floors

Outsourcing Cleaning Tasks

7 Cleaning is one of the most commonly outsourced services. Some of the reasons for this include:

- Basic cleaning tasks are standardized, with little variation among different enterprises;
- The nature of the job and required standard of performance can be clearly defined and specified in a contract, unlike more technical or professional jobs for which such specification is harder to develop;
- Many organisations which predominantly employ higher paid workers feel uncomfortable dealing with labour relations of low paid employees. By outsourcing, such issues are transferred to a contractor whose staff are experienced in dealing with such issues, and, this approach can benefit from economies of scale;
- If a cleaner is unavailable due to sickness or leave, a contractor which employs many cleaners can easily assign a substitute. A small organisation which employs one or a few cleaners directly will have much trouble in handling such issues; and
- The commercial cleaning sector is a \$300 million per annum¹⁴ industry employing 22,000 cleaners. There are about 400 companies in the industry.

8 It is possible for contractors to offer high-standard services efficiently and effectively in accordance with global standards. To take this road, all industry stakeholders must work together for certainty and quality. The industry needs to agree on, and implement benchmarks for contracting. Contractors tendering for work need to know what kind of service delivery is necessary to satisfy the needs of owners.

¹⁴ Extracted from the Environmental Services Working Group Report from the Ministry of Trade and Industry - http://app.mti.gov.sg/data/pages/507/doc/ERC_DOM_MainReport_Part%203.6.pdf

9 Despite the strenuous, but critical work, cleaners in Singapore are struggling to survive. According to the Ministry of Manpower (MOM)¹⁵, the gross median pay for a cleaner (industrial) is only about \$800.00.

10 When cleaning jobs are seen as steady jobs with decent incomes and reasonable working hours, good workers will be attracted to them and, may remain in the sector for a long time. The level of experience among restroom cleaners goes up and transience goes down. Landlords too will benefit in many ways. Examples include increased tenant satisfaction, reduced tenant churn, reduced operating costs, increased stability, higher industry standards, and, reduced Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) hazards.

11 Cleaners want to work with owners, tenants and contractors to make this a better industry. This chapter aims to make the case for a new beginning to contracting for cleaning services and to propose what benchmarks are necessary for all the industry's players.

Vision for the Cleaning Contractors & Toilet Cleaners

12 The Cleaners & Contractors Committee aims to create the vision:

- *A better cleaning industry in which all parties collectively receive quality services; and*
- *A better cleaning industry in which building owners can plan on certainty in the labour costs underpinning service contracts if they know that sudden increases in costs will be avoided*

13 To achieve this, training and development of restroom cleaners is a must. Training and development ensures that restroom cleaners' wages commensurate with their work, and this helps in motivating them.

14 Restroom cleaning is seen as dirty, and the cleaners are generally low paid. Although the obvious answer would be to pay restroom cleaners more, we believe it is not the only solution to staff retention. The cleaning industry is very competitive and clients will not be prepared to pay over the odds for restroom cleaning service just so that contractors can pay their restroom cleaners more.

15 The solution is to invest in a nationally recognized certified training in restroom cleaners - the adoption of government-driven accreditation schemes, and, frameworks designed for the welfare of restroom cleaners.

¹⁵ Extracted from MOM's Report on Wages in Singapore 2008 - http://www.mom.gov.sg/publish/etc/medialib/mom_library/mrdsd/row_2008.Par.34797.File.tmp/mrdsd_2008_ROW.pdf

Chapter 5: Accreditation Scheme for the Cleaning Industry

1 Accreditation is important to all cleaning service providers who seek to demonstrate that their businesses are well managed, comply with recommended practices, and, are dedicated to continuous improvement of public works management practices.

2 Accreditation ensures:

- National and even international recognition for the commitment to processes that promote good governance;
- Recognition for the commitment to policies, procedures and processes that promote effective delivery of projects and cleaning services;
- A process for conducting a needs assessment to ensure that all critical services have been addressed;
- A process for setting goals for improvement of all practices, facilities and services;
- Increased productivity and effectiveness through critical evaluation of programmes and services;
- Tools for establishing performance measurement systems and internal performance standards for operations, management and administrative functions;
- A visible form of recognition that can be used to gain community support in keeping public facilities clean; and
- A process for staying abreast of the latest developments in public cleaning operation and maintenance.

3 An accreditation system of the companies in the cleaning industry would help clients identify good quality cleaning service providers and high restroom cleaning service standards in the sector.

4 An example of an accreditation system for cleaning companies for public sector contracts is the BCA's current system of accrediting companies (L1-L6)¹⁶ based on financial strength instead of the quality of services. BCA may wish to review the current systems with a view towards grading companies based on their service quality, and extending the system to all contracts.

¹⁶ Extracted from BCA's Tendering Limits (effective from 16 June 2009) - http://www.bca.gov.sg/ContractorsRegistry/contractors_tendering_limits.html

5 Another option would be for the industry associations to develop their own accreditation and ranking systems. The government should recognize this accreditation and use them when embarking on tender exercises. In addition, the government should consider including accreditation as a criteria for applying for government assistance schemes such as LEFS, LETAS and the Industry Upgrading Fund.

6 A national cleaning contractor accreditation scheme should take into account a company's track record towards meeting manpower regulations.

Case Study:

Knight Frank Estate Management (KFEM) only invites accredited contractors for its tenders and quotations. As a value-added service it offers to the properties it manages, KFEM recommends its listed cleaning service providers based on the property's size, character and specific needs.

7 To promote operational efficiency and minimize potential problems for clients, KFEM's criteria for accrediting service providers covers:

- Financial capability;
- Track record;
- Quality system;
- Organisational Structure;
- Size; and
- Use of IT / mechanisation

8 To retain the best contractors in this scheme, annual appraisals need to be conducted to ensure consistency of service. Companies that fail to perform well will be de-listed from the scheme for a certain period.

Develop Model Contracts with Standard Requirements

9 Working along the lines of a national accreditation for cleaning contractors, cleaning service providers should begin integrating a framework of model contracts. Features can include a focus on the quality of work and not just on number of cleaners to complete a task, the need for certified restroom cleaners, and, provisions for lengthening the contract duration.

10 We need to move away from head-count based contracts to performance based contracts. Currently, many cleaning contracts are based on head counts. However, head count systems penalises a company that is able to use its workers more efficiently. For example, if a contract specifies that 10 workers would be needed, a company that is able to complete the work with only 5 workers should stand a better chance to win the tender. This would eliminate the need for extra expenses.

11 A standardized 'model' contracts for the cleaning services industry will codify industry best practices and help eliminate imbalances between service providers and clients.

12 Tender Contracts to include a clause specifying that it is mandatory for restroom cleaners to be certified under the National Skills Recognition System (NSRS) and the Restroom Specialist Training Course (RSTC) (**Annex G**).

13 The short contract duration discourages capital investment and lowers service commitment. Longer contracts would encourage SMEs to make the necessary investments. To deal with poor performances, the contract could include exit clauses, formalized periodic reviews, and, independent auditing of the contractor's performance. One variation of such contract should specify a minimum proportion of certified workers to work on the contract.

14 The government has already taken a first step by requiring that all cleaning workers in schools and the airport must be NSRS certified. The government, as the single largest consumer of environmental services, can further facilitate this process by imposing the above requirement for all its contractors and encourage the development of model agreements.

15 The Government should also revoke the contracts of its contractors who have engaged in poor or illegal practices. For example, some contractors employ foreign construction workers as cleaners. However the PSSOC does not allow contracts to be revoked even in these circumstances. The Government should review the PSSOC to ensure that contractors who engage in undesirable practices are penalized, like revoking their current contracts in all government projects, and, barring them from tendering government contracts for at least two terms.

Case study:

ISS, a cleaning service provider with more than 3,500 cleaners is a strong supporter of training and development. ISS invests in staff training and development, job mechanisation, job re-design and enlargement to expand the job scope of workers to advance their careers. This is made possible as the company does not bid for cleaning contracts with cut-throat low prices.

Chapter 6: Training Programme

1 There is a need to improve the working conditions in the cleaning industry to address the manpower shortage. The long-term objective is to build a workforce sufficient to meet the local cleaning industry's needs.

2 However, potential individuals who may wish to enter the cleaning industry have a poor image of it. They are often not used to the working conditions, and, may also used to better benefits like leave, medical benefits and overtime pay compared to the cleaning industry. Restroom cleaners who upgrade must confidently look to benefits commensurate with their higher skills.

Increasing Supply of Restroom Cleaners

3 The cleaning industry is very labour intensive. The employment and retention of cleaners is an issue the industry has to constantly deal with.

4 Some of the committee findings include:

- The restroom cleaning industry is predominantly made up of females aged 40 and above;
- The workforce mostly comprises of staff with little or no basic skills. 90% of the committee members reported difficulties in recruiting permanent restroom cleaning staff, partly because of the wages and job task; and
- Although there is a healthy supply of foreign restroom cleaners in the public and private sectors, we need to build up a pool of local restroom cleaners as well because there will be huge gap to fill once the foreign workers return back to their country of origin.

Government-initiated Career Fairs for Restroom Cleaners

5 Since the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) launched The Singapore Service Star to recognize establishments providing good service on 4th December 2008, there has been greater emphasis for quality service. Restroom cleaning should also be recognized as a critical profession in Singapore. The MOM and STB could help organise job fairs for the cleaning industry to attract more workers in the sector and to educate them on the career advancement opportunities.

6 MOM should also work with the Environmental Management Association of Singapore (EMAS) on informal recruitment drives at NTUC job fairs for interested cleaners to apply on the spot.

Restroom Cleaners Registry

7 A registry of full-time and part-time restroom cleaners with the Restroom Association of Singapore would provide a good avenue to build a pool of certified restroom cleaners. Companies who require such services can turn to this registrar to meet short and long-term manpower needs.

More creative use of existing manpower

8 The trend of getting restroom cleaners to multi-task may also help to increase efficiency, job prospects, and, higher wages. Possibilities include:

- **Pooling of restroom cleaners** - Companies could consider pooling workers so that they can efficiently utilize their workers. Here, they need to work out operations considerations such as labour-sharing arrangements with each other and with the cleaners; and
- **Encourage multi-tasking** - Most restroom cleaner's work from 7am to 4pm. Cleaning service providers in Australia and New Zealand currently also employ restroom cleaners as security guards or pest control officers. To achieve this here, companies need to redesign their work-processes. In addition, workers will have to adapt to the greater work demands, including training.

Restroom Cleaners Welfare

9 Recognizing the restroom cleaners' efforts is extremely important in motivating them. The following are some recommendations (not exhaustive) that will help to professionalize the restroom workers' image:

- Entitled to 2 weeks paid leave each year;
- Right to request flexible working hours if they have children or parents with disabilities;
- Providing a safe working environment and the right to seek redress for accidents. Contractors who provide a risk assessment method and statement (**Annex H**) should gain a advantage in tender contracts;
- Right to 'blow the whistle' on their employer's wrongdoing; and
- Entitled to receive a payslip showing gross and net pay alongside CPF deductions.

Audit by Contractors

10 Audits checks conducted every two weeks following the process shown in Fig X are a professional way to monitor the cleaning standards of their restroom cleaners as well as the clients' state of mind.

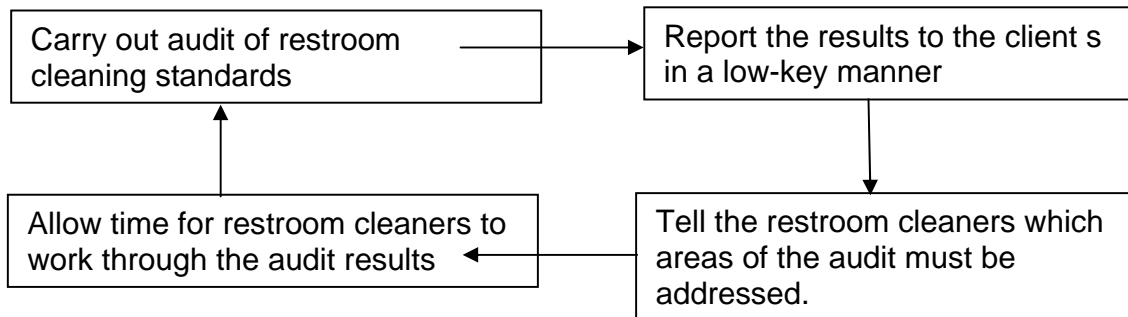


Fig. X Audit Process

11 Contractors could create an audit sheet containing fields they can complete as they carry out the audit. The client should sign the last section to confirm/dispute the findings.

Training to Increase Productivity

12 There should be an emphasis on training for restroom cleaners to be better able to upgrade their skills and better fit in the companies' plan to mechanise and use technology.

13 Based on the cleaning industry's experience with the setting up the Centre for Cleaning Technology, similar industry-driven centres should be established. Such centres will train new cleaners, upgrade existing skills and apply technology to enhance productivity and recognition of the different types of cleaning services.

14 The upgrading of cleaning services staff must also take into consideration the expectations of workers. Otherwise, the turnover will be high and the effort in training workers will be wasted. The key issue lies in new entrants into the sector, who may have unrealistic expectations of the work requirements in the sector. Therefore, industry players should consider orientating restroom cleaners prior to employment to give them a more accurate impression of the requirements to work in the cleaning industry.

15 The development of career progression paths would also encourage cleaners to enter and stay within the cleaning services sector. These career progression paths should identify skill levels for different occupations within the sector.

16 As part of a pilot programme to motivate and improve the cleaners of public restrooms, the Ang Mo Kio-Yio Chu Kang Town Council successfully conducted a pilot Restroom Specialist Training Course for seven toilet cleaners in August 2009. Overall, these cleaners gained knowledge on good restroom cleaning practices. When they exercised these practices, the hygiene levels of the restrooms under their care improved.

Increase Funding for Training

17 Training is expensive. More funding could further incentivise companies to send their restroom cleaners for additional training. One possibility is to encourage contractors to provide a proportion of the tender contract value to be set aside for the training of cleaners to fulfil the contract. This would force contractors to upgrade their workers. The Government, as the largest customer, could consider implementing such a system for its tender contracts. CAAS has already implemented such a scheme.

18 The Workforce Development Agency's (WDA) Skills Development Fund subsidises restroom cleaning courses between 50 to 80 percent for locals only. WDA should explore subsidizing restroom cleaning courses to also include foreigners.

Chapter 7: Grow Local Cleaning Companies

1 The cleaning industry in Singapore is one in which there is intense competition among a number of SMEs. The industry operates on the basis of competitive bidding. Low standard restroom operators have the power to set benchmarks and force all cleaning contractors to sink to their levels of services. Often, these cleaning contractors engage in further sub-contracting or franchising, which reduces accountability and performance. Many sub-contractors do not carry sufficient insurance in order to cut costs which produces another layer of risk for unsuspecting restroom operators. The downward trend in service quality is exacerbated by deregulation and globalisation: This downward trend is well documented by industry expert Shaun Ryan¹⁷:

2 The competitive nature of the product market means that cleaning companies are forced to take a cost cutting approach to gain competitive advantage. With clients demanding 'champagne specifications at flat beer prices' contract cleaning companies are forced into a competitive strategy based on cost at the expense of quality'.

3 This strategy hurts everyone from property investors and building tenants to cleaning contractors and cleaners. There is a problem amongst commercial property owners and the property services firms. The standard of property services in Singapore can be improved as tenants often complain that their offices are not properly cleaned and that restroom cleanliness is not taken seriously enough.

4 Cleaning contractors themselves recognize the problem and often talk about the industry devouring itself from within through illogical pricing, often implemented by illegal subcontracting. Some property service contractors are essentially phantom businesses as they organize their workers on others' business sites and possess few tangible assets.

5 Some cleaning contractors operate elaborate sub-contracting schemes that deny workers basic protections covered in the Employment Act.

6 Along with legislated performance standards to improve the business environment, cleaning companies will be able to stabilize a workforce which currently has a high turnover. They will be able to offer quality services without fear that they will be unfairly undercut by rogue companies.

7 When small cleaning companies integrate together, property managers and their tenants will receive reliable services from dependable contractors without fear of how cleaning contractors looking to "cut corners" will impact them.

8 Hard-working restroom cleaners and their families will benefit from a stable industry with better wages and benefits without fear that rogue companies will drag the standards down.

¹⁷ Shaun Ryan, 'Taken to the Cleaners? The Peculiarities of Employment Relations in NSW Contract Cleaning Industry', AIRAANZ conference Wollongong, Jan 2001

Improving the Business Environment

9 Contractors must integrate to provide better and more efficient services. The cleaning industry is also fragmented. Co-operation is essential to achieve economies of scale and reduce costs. Larger companies would also be in a better position to:

- Speed up the process of professionalisation, as it has more resources to invest in equipment and training;
- Raise consumer confidence in using local cleaners;
- Create a cycle of more attractive jobs attracting more cleaners particularly those potentially vulnerable to economic restructuring; and
- Reduce the unit cost of operations and allow for more competitive pricing and flexibility of services offered.

10 In addition, companies which can provide one-stop services, combining various cleaning services (pest control, landscaping etc), would make it easier for customers to turn towards cleaning service providers, hence enhancing demand for cleaning services.

R & D Grants by the Government

11 Government grants to help businesses bring in new technology would be useful in raising productivity and professionalism in the sector. However, many of the R&D projects in the environmental services sector are small (e.g. less than \$50,000). Such micro-level projects that encourage technology adoption should be assessed on more flexible criteria. To facilitate environmental services to undertake R&D, the government should consider introducing micro-level developmental funding for micro-level projects. As the construction and real estate sector continues to grow, the demand for property cleaning services will increase.

Please Pay Me a Decent Wage

I am worried that all my company now wants from me is to work harder and faster by cutting our hours. I do not think they understand what I do and they do not appreciate us. All I can say is please pay me a decent wage so that I can get my family off from the CDC's help. I do not want my children to grow up living a life dependent on others.

This is Madam Noraini. She has worked as a cleaner for over 5 years. When she started in 2001, she worked 48 hours a week but she has had a reduction of hours to 30 hours per week now. Her wages have increased from \$600 to \$700.

She works to support her children and her husband who is unable to work full-time due to sickness. She has to rely on the CDC family assistance package just to cover the costs of living and fears that her children will grow up thinking it is

Loyalty Deserves Respect

Job security and being treated with some respect is the big issue with Madam Lim. The 53-year old decided to change cleaning contractors and suddenly her whole life was in turmoil.

'I had been working for this company for 5 years - emptying garbage bins, cleaning restrooms – never a word of complaint about me and the job I do.'

Then her employer lost its contract to another company. 'They came to me with a 'take it or leave it' offer. Either I change my job to a morning shift and accept working on weekends without any extra pay or I have no job at all. This is not very fair and not a nice way to treat a loyal worker.

Users Sub-Committee

*Mission Statement: Appreciate the Provision of
Clean Restrooms; Adopt Good Restroom
Etiquette*

Users Sub-Committee Members

- National Environment Agency
- North West Community Development Council
- Singapore Kindness Movement
- Society for the Physically Disabled
- South West Community Development Council

Chapter 8: Education

Introduction: A True Reflection of our Social Graciousness – Proper Etiquette in Public Restrooms

1 Public restrooms can be used as an effective yardstick in gauging how socially responsible people are. An inconsiderate user who wilfully dirties the premises succeeds in translating the message that that person lacks the social skills befitting a developed nation. As a nation, we take pride in achieving high standards in subjects like law and order, public housing, and health, amongst others. However, irresponsible actions taken of a few could lead to unwanted stereotypes about our citizens. If the yardstick delivers a compromising verdict on the state of our social graciousness, would we, as Singaporeans, be justified in taking pride in our achievements in many fields?

2 We run the risk of undermining our country's reputation for cleanliness through the failure to address the continuous need to educate the public on public restroom hygiene and etiquette. We can no longer assume that this is already taught in homes and work places as there is evidence presented by restroom owners and cleaners of errant usage of public restrooms. The user's sub-committee discussed the need to create better education packages, promote resonating awareness campaigns, and, instilling the message, amongst all public restroom stake holders that everyone is responsible in keeping public restrooms clean.

3 The user's sub-committee determined a set of findings and recommendations that fall under the chapters of Education, Awareness and Recognition. These chapters will delve into the current programmes run; the necessary improvements that can tackle the shortcomings highlighted, and, offer new proposals to raise the standards of user competence.

4 Through these recommendations, it is the sub-committee's hope that users take the necessary steps to practice and influence their peers to keep our public restrooms clean. A true measure of our graciousness starts from individuals promoting and practicing the right attitude.

Tackling Old Habits - Getting Across to Everyone

5 The sub-committee raised the issue of deeply entrenched habits of customs having a profound effect on user behaviour and social responsibility. Business owners and cleaners have often raised the concern that although clean restrooms have been provided and regular maintenance is a norm in many establishments, it is a challenge to continue with this provision due irresponsible usage. Isolated cases have seen blame passed on to individuals, highlighting the lack of a responsible conscious ethic when restrooms are visited.

6 Without forming stereotypes as to which particular demographic is the culprit of such misdemeanours, the users sub-committee identified the pressing need to get different public sector groups to change old habits. They include food vendors, teenagers, the elderly, foreign workers, service industry employees, and, the general public, amongst others.

Peer Teaching

7 There is great potential in students taking charge of the education process. Within its school education programme, RAS experienced a degree of success in getting students to teach other students and spreading messages about restroom hygiene and etiquette. An example of this was when students from Holy Innocents' Primary School went to Jamiyah Children's' Home in 2009 and presented ideas and ways to keep restrooms clean as well as helping to conduct a hand washing training exercise for the children there. A strong message indicated here is that once students exhibit the enthusiasm and dedication that is needed to convey a public message, it resonates onto new groups of students as well. Peer-to-peer teaching and influence has been in existence in society for different reasons. It would be prudent to harness this approach and develop proper facilitation packages that allow for students to take the lead in peer education.

Customized Talks and Workshops for Individual Groups of People

8 Taking into account the various needs, attitudes, mannerisms and traditions adopted by these groups of individuals, the sub-committee identified the need for target specific programmes for each group. This allows for customized talks and workshops to be delivered effectively with the aim of maximizing the yield in outcomes. In the interest of promoting social graciousness, the methodology employed has to vary according to different groups.

9 For example, foreign workers bring along their traits and practices which differ from accepted practices here. An effective way would be to impress upon them our social etiquette and national standards. This helps them to practice good social responsibility and conform to our standards.

10 Therefore, the support of various government agencies and community organisations, like the Community Development Councils (CDCs), own councils, and, grassroots organisations, is necessary for RAS to conduct talks that cater to the different social groups. Private enterprises that have a huge pool of employees would also be actively sought and encouraged by RAS to attend customized talks and workshops. In fact, this recommendation has already resulted in the creation of customized talks and seminars for different groups in 2009. Two separate talks for skilled foreign workers and talks for hawker centre food vendors were conducted. Positive reviews and achieving the learning outcomes have encouraged the RAS to

plan for more such talks in the near future. However, in order to reach out to all, support is necessary.

Making Programmes More Relevant

11 The sub-committee looked into the various programmes offered by each member organisation to seek possible avenues for collaboration. Current platforms and community events are being assessed for joint participation to allow for the integration of messages relating to clean and hygienic restrooms. For example, CDCs have mentioned that RAS is welcome to come on board their community events as a partner.

12 A review of current education packages and outreach initiatives was also conducted leading to the birth of new initiatives. RAS has a number of education programmes for Pre-school, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary students (**Annex I**). Over the years, the programme had undergone facelifts to instil the concept of ownership and social responsibility. This was done with the intention of creating effective programmes and updating current initiatives that can be sustained. Members also discussed the viability of conveying more pertinent information, such as importance of restrooms for the handicapped. Community events held by the South West and the North West CDCs would also explore the option of spreading RAS public service messages.

Chapter 9: Awareness

A Roving Public Awareness Campaign for Everyone

1 While conducting customized talks for target specific groups, it is necessary to concurrently conduct awareness initiatives island-wide. The sub-committee raised the concern that not all users are aware of statistics pertaining to risks that result from dirty restrooms. People may not be aware of the laws and legislation covering the use of public restrooms. Unwanted practices such as littering, vandalism and smoking in public restrooms have often been the result of ignorance of laws that frown upon such practices. Education is necessary, but it would be more effective in the form of a nationwide awareness campaign. Statistics of medical ailments attributed to dirty restrooms like the Hand Foot and Mouth Disease need to be conveyed to the general public. This may inspire people to observe good hygiene practices when using restrooms to minimize the risk of bacterial infection.

2 In partnership with NEA, a roving exhibition will be conducted island-wide in 2010 to promote awareness. RAS and NEA will also partner with the CDCs that promote public hygiene programmes. The exhibitions will include forums to share and exchange feedback, assembly talks for schools and, interactive games for the young. RAS is currently compiling an awareness package with inputs from the NEA and the Health Promotion Board (HPB). It is anticipated that via CDC events, reaching out to the general public would be made easier. It also gives RAS more opportunities to introduce its awareness package at community events.

Harnessing the Different Media, Exchanging Information

3 The media is an important tool to be used to reach out to the community. Forum articles demonstrate how the media can be used to lay the groundwork for effective change. The importance of having clean public restrooms and observing good social practices can resonate on a long term basis should the media provide regular coverage and publication.

Strength and Outreach Potential of the Media

4 The media can also serve to position Singapore internationally as one of the select group of countries that gives importance to public restroom cleanliness and hygiene practices. Forum letters (**Annex B**) included feedback provided by tourists and it must be noted that their responses to how restrooms in Singapore appear to be, have yielded negative comments. By implementing the recommendations in this report, the improvements made can be disseminated via the media.

Frequent Exchange of Information, Endeavouring to Change Mindsets

5 The user's sub-committee brought up the need to exchange information and share its initiatives with media partners. Such an initiative will help to convince people of our seriousness of our joint efforts, and, the preconceived notions about dirty restrooms are no longer valid.

Using various forms of new media to generate audience appeal

6 There was also an identified need to harness the various multimedia platforms to spread the messages. Blogs, podcasts, Twitter, and, Facebook, are amongst the popular forms of communications. Reaching out to the youth segment in particular require the use of such platforms. The recommendations are as follows:

- RAS and the CDCs to regularly exchange newsletters and allocate content for each others' initiatives and RAS events to be publicised in the NEA website;
- New media like Facebook and Blogs to be updated to encourage more user contributions;
- Issue joint press releases to strengthen the integrity of upcoming initiatives; and
- A detailed LOO Map is now present on the RAS website to inform the public about clean restrooms within their CDCs

Getting youth groups and young adults to spread community messages

7 The sub-committee discussed the huge potential in welcoming youth groups to champion causes and educate the public. Youth groups can take charge of educating pre-school and primary school students. This allows for the creation of peer teaching and a possible 'big brother/big sister' initiative. It makes it all the more unique to see teenagers and young adults spearheading initiatives to relate more creatively with their younger counterparts. Youth groups would receive training provided by RAS and be sought to conduct talks and workshops.

8 Schools are often looking for new projects that allow their students to complete their Community Involvement Programme (CIP) and Project Work commitments. Organisations like the Young Change Makers and National Institute of Education's Group Endeavours in Service Learning (GESL) project also readily encourage youth groups and trainee teachers respectively to adopt community service projects. This serves as an excellent opportunity to invite these groups to participate in community initiatives directed towards public restroom hygiene. This allows for youth groups and

young adults to firstly be aware of the importance of social responsibility before reaching out to the community in restroom related projects. The recommendations are:

- Encourage secondary and tertiary school students to conduct more public surveys and compile case studies;
- Guiding students to be 'Loo Inspectors' in their own schools and neighbourhood;
- Schools and youth groups to be given endorsements and recognition for community based initiatives;
- MOE to help schools to thoroughly cleaning their restrooms in schools with industrial cleaning agents to remove years of bacteria build up;
- Tertiary students to be mentored to conduct workshops for preschool and primary school students; and
- To work with CDCs and grassroots organisations for a more effective outreach to the community.

Chapter 10: Recognition

‘Model Behaviour to Generate Proper Etiquette

1 Schools would also be actively encouraged to undertake education programmes that allow for students to know proper hand washing techniques and adopt good restroom etiquette. CDCs would recommend the programmes for schools and encourage them to sign up with RAS. The Model Restrooms @ Schools project (**Annex J**) would be showcased as an example. When schools dedicate the time to ensure their pupils learn and remember proper hand washing techniques and observe gracious behaviour, they will greatly reduce the risk of possible bacterial infections within their environment.

The need for national recognition – ‘LOO Awards’

2 This would allow for cleaners to justify the commitments put into performing their duties and dissuade irresponsible user behaviour. The user’s sub-committee recommended the setting up of a national awards programme to recognize and honour the continuous efforts of responsible organisations, dedicated cleaners and pro active individuals. With this in mind, the inaugural Loo Awards ceremony was implemented by RAS, recognizing organisations, cleaners and users based on nominations by the public.

Identifying cleaning contractors with a good track record

3 The identification of restroom owners with star rated public restrooms will give them the added impetus to strive to maintain their standing with the public. The next phase of this recognition would be to include a list of contractors who are tasked with maintaining these clean premises. The committee believes that this form of good practice deserves recognition and it must be made aware that it is a shared effort that goes towards the daily maintenance of public restrooms. Therefore, it has been recommended to RAS to include an additional component within the LOO Map which features the contractors who maintain the 3, 4 and 5 –star rated restrooms within each CDC. A separate list would also be created to display a ranking system and background information on each service provider.

The introduction of a Cleaners’ Day in Singapore

4 Having a Cleaners’ Day in Singapore will allow for the general public to honour and respect the work put in by the cleaners. It also allows more awareness of cleaners’ working conditions and slowly goes towards removing negative mindsets. The committee suggested starting out with a soft launch at schools by introducing it as part of their calendar of events. The success and interest gained from conducting it at schools could then signal a nationwide campaign.

Chapter 11: The Way Forward

1 The report seeks to supply all participating stake holders the necessary information to work towards improvement. The RAS and its fellow IAWC members see this as a blueprint for improving public restrooms. The IAWC believes that through the implementation of its recommendations, long term success can resonate and the overall goal can be achieved.

2 'The way forward' to achieving clean public restrooms first requires the support of key stakeholders such as government agencies. RAS' initiatives have been warmly received since its inception in 1998. However, for the overhaul of our public restrooms to work, we need the consistent support of everyone. We recommend considerations be made toward restrooms when future legislation(s) is/are introduced. Dubious contractual practices with regards to contractors and cleaners have to be assessed. Awareness and social graciousness require greater attention when implementing community programmes. All this goes towards providing a much needed endorsement of RAS' efforts.

Involvement via integration

3 Via the IAWC, public feedback and discussions with partners, another set of future plans include integrating programmes that have mutual relevance for owners, cleaners and users. The school programme will undergo a revamp to incorporate assessment of their restroom facilities, checking of cleaners and updating the education phase. This is to ensure a more holistic approach is adopted when introducing a positive restroom culture in each school. Adhering to the LOO Campaign's pledge, now a concerted effort will be made to ensure that school restrooms are assessed in accordance with the basic 3-star benchmark and schools adopting good, holistic practices will be recognised nationally (**Annex K**).

4 Via the education phase, students will be encouraged to venture out of their schools to part take in RAS initiatives with private sector stakeholders. These stakeholders include Food & Beverage outlets such as coffee shops and restaurants, shopping centres and libraries. As part of their own school community projects, they will either design posters or educational messages that would be distributed to coffee shop patrons or displayed and the abovementioned locations. Students will also be sourced to distribute restroom hygiene awareness collaterals and make patrons more aware about any establishments aspiring to attain HTP grading. Hence the school education programme sees itself integrating to support its sister programmes that includes public education, HTP and any other special projects (**Annex K**).

5 Future initiatives require support from conscientious private and public sector enterprises too. Funding and assistance is an important factor in determining the short and long term success of initiatives. RAS has experienced limited success in securing the resources necessary although it must acknowledge the NEA being an avid

supporter of its programmes. Working together and jointly spearheading projects would convince potential partners to generously dedicate time and money to help a worthy cause.

6 IAWC's future plan is to see the success of our recommendations take shape over the next five years. Our expertise will serve us well when strategizing new initiatives and our goals will be attained. However, as a non profit organisation with big aspirations but limited resources, those next five years will bear fruit if proactive support from relevant stakeholder's figures is generated. The first steps have been taken by our IAWC members and now we seek to take giant strides in the restroom business with support and accreditation from all sectors and stakeholders.

7 We are a country of change makers and take pride in making the brave decisions for change. Changes to the state of our public restrooms and improving conditions for all stakeholders need our decision makers to start acting now.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

OWNERS & OPERATORS

Owners' Responsibility in Providing Quality Facilities and Choosing the Right Cleaning Contractors

- Provision of clean and hygienic restrooms with working fixtures.
- Ascertain user comforts and provide opportunities for users to offer feedback.
- Pick the right cleaning contractors and cleaners; place a priority on cleaners' training qualifications as compared to cheaper tenders.
- Make users aware of the provision of clean facilities through publicity.
- Constant review of cleaners' performances through regular checks.
- Educate food vendors at F & B outlets via public education

Harnessing Proper Design Features for Restrooms and Maintaining/Upgrading Technology within Restrooms to Meet Current Standards

- Review of adequate restroom fixtures and workable facilities
- Incorporate new design features for restrooms, upgrading current facilities to discourage litter and misuse.
- Educate users to properly use new features in restrooms.
- Source funding and subsidies to encourage owners to upgrade restroom facilities.
- Introduce the viability of water and energy saving features and ways to better manage restrooms.

Incorporating Assessment Features like the Happy Toilet Programme to Ensure Restrooms are of a 3 Star Rating

- Set up self assessment protocols for owners to perform regular checks of their restrooms.
- Assess the viability of signing up for the Happy Toilet Programme (HTP) to ensure restrooms are of at least a 3 star standard either via offering subsidies or license regulations.
- Make the HTP a viable and reliable testing method for all public restrooms.
- Discuss viable and fair enforcement protocols for errant owners.

Self Regulation

- Empower owners and cleaners to report errant users.
- Review methods of providing feedback to the NEA either via RAS or other means.
- Review of education techniques to dissuade users from littering or misusing the restrooms in other ways.

CLEANERS & CONTRACTORS

Setting Guidelines to Ensure Cleaners Employ Best Practices

- Introduction of a uniform set of accepted best practices for cleaners and contractors that meets nationally recognized standards of good service.
- Regulate checks on cleaners. Suggestion: educating first or second time offences, subsequent offenders to receive fines or probation.
- Recognize cleaners who receive good reviews and offering commendation to preserve job satisfaction.
- Advertise via media or at establishments of cleaners with best practices; *visit us not just for not just what we sell but for the guaranteed good service we provide.*
- Contractors to continuously stress best practices for cleaners and be recognized by industry watchdogs for best practices.

All Cleaners to be Equipped with Proper Training

- Discuss the offering of subsidies or incentives to contractors to encourage cleaners to be sent for proper training.
- Review of current RSTC and NSRS training standards, costs and assessing their viability for cleaners.
- Make training courses more attractive and viable for contractors.
- Explore the feasibility of contractors, owners and job recreation agencies bearing the costs for training of cleaners.
- Subsequent assessment for cleaners to ensure training methods are correctly employed

Cleaners' Salaries and Welfare to be Monitored and Reassessed

- Review of the current pay schemes of cleaners. Offering better pay scales for NSRS or RSTC certified cleaners.
- Introducing added benefits to make employment more attractive.
- Introduce performance related bonuses for cleaners employing best practices.
- Offer loyalty bonuses for cleaners with 5 or more years in the industry.
- Offer pay or other incentives for cleaners with sustained achievement in employing best practices / zero complaints.

Initiating Recruitment Drives and Campaigns to Increase the Pool of Trained Cleaners

- Use the media to introduce campaigns to employ more cleaners as part of job recreation opportunities.
- Highlight good cleaners in the media to encourage job viability.
- Publish payment benefits.
- Contractors to work with WDA seeking funds/subsidies to employ more trained cleaners.

USERS

Current Education Programmes for Youth Groups and Adults to be Reviewed

- Review of education programmes established by RAS, the CDCs and NEA.
- Source feedback to better enhance education programmes to meet specified needs.
- Get the media more involved in publicizing education programmes to spread outreach.
- Member representatives to offer resources and organisational expertise to reach out to their areas of influence, i.e. public talks at hawker centres, community based education programmes at schools.

Introducing a Series of Competitions, Media Packages and Campaigns to Raise User Awareness

- Review of current competitions aimed at toilet cleanliness to be shared at reviewed with a view to introduce them island wide.
- Competitions for owners, cleaners and users (schools and the general public) to be initiated with incentives for greater participation.
- Create a series of awareness campaigns via the CDCs to reach out to users.
- Explore the use of various media effectively to endorse campaigns and competitions.
- Continuous press releases to be issued to the press and securing the right media partners.

Introducing Steps to Encourage Users' Social Responsibilities

- Linked to the previous agenda; campaigns, competitions and media awareness.
- Recognising and rewarding users, offering incentives.
- Appreciate and encourage users to continually provide feedback.

- Discuss how to effectively use education packages via public talks and school programmes to encourage users.
- Proper posters and educational material to be discussed.
- Enforcement protocols to be discussed with NEA: possible suggestions of advising first time errant users and stronger measures for repeat offenders.

Appreciation of Owners and Cleaners Providing Clean Facilities

- Suggestion of a recognized Cleaners' Day to be introduced island wide.
- Offer users the opportunity to appraise restroom facilities.
- Explore the viability of using the 'Bouquet Section' of the Straits Times Forum to acknowledge cleaners and owners of restrooms.
- Member representatives to request their regular newsletters and publications to promote clean facilities.
- School students to adopt projects that involve appraising public restrooms around their schools as part of community involvement.
- Set up a website to promote restrooms with HTP 3, 4 and 5 star ratings and their locations.

FORUM LETTERS

SPEAK

What do you think of the Restroom Association of Singapore's plans to audit public toilets?



"I think it's a good idea, especially for places like kopitiams and shophouses. Hygiene is very important and I think this will help ensure that toilets are decent and clean enough for use."

– Mr S Arul Selvam, 26, real estate agent

26 Nov 08,
The New Paper

Make hygiene-grading criteria public

I WONDER how many people pay attention to the hygiene grading of hawker stalls they patronise, let alone use it as a guide to make decisions on whether to patronise a particular stall or not.

The grading system should be retained but it could be modified to make it more effective, so that hawkers would have more reason to raise their standards of hygiene.

Unhygienic practices still abound among hawkers.

The following are the most common:

❑ Handling cooked food with bare hands

This includes, for example, holding on to a piece of meat while cutting it.

❑ Using the same piece of cloth for multiple purposes

I have witnessed a stallholder in a food court using one cloth to clean surfaces in the stall, wipe his hands and even dry wet crockery.

❑ Not washing hands after visiting the toilet

My friends have seen cooks in uniform taking toilet breaks and walking straight out of the toilet without washing their hands.

❑ Using gloved hands to handle other things besides cooked food

Using the same gloved hands to handle money and cooked food defeats the purpose of wearing gloves in the first place.

❑ Improper cleaning of utensils

It is common to see food debris

such as rice stuck between the prongs of forks.

Forks and spoons are also cold and oily, which means that hot water was not used to wash them.

Moving forward, NEA should let the public know what its rating criteria are for food outlets.

Only then would the public be able to report cases of non-adherence to the criteria.

No list can be exhaustive but it would serve as a guide for members of the public.

It would also make it easier for them to alert the authorities in the event that hawkers or food outlets fall short of the criteria, as NEA officers cannot be omnipresent.

Hygiene standards also have to be looked at holistically.

Food preparation, the handling of leftovers, storage of food and waste-disposal systems, along with the standards of cleaning and maintenance,

13 Apr 09 - My Paper

Mr Tan Chin Aik

Shameful state of our loos spreads to malls

I AM writing about an emerging issue in which all Singaporeans are stakeholders: a decade-long, ongoing deterioration in the condition of our public toilets.

Recently, a friend of mine had a painful digestive upset and found, to his horror, that the McDonald's toilet had no paper and was in poor condition. So he paid 10 cents to use a nearby Chinatown Mall toilet. He went in to find out there was no toilet paper, a foul odour and much debris on the floor. I could have told him this particular toilet had not restocked toilet paper in years.

By the time he had bought several wads of toilet paper from the toilet guard, he suffered a serious and highly embarrassing accident. The lack of toilet paper aside, this mall toilet has been in a deplorable condition for years.

My friend asked the mall manager why the mall did not stock toilet paper; and what financial gain was realised by subjecting customers to this indignity. The manager apologised but then tried to deflect responsibility, say-

ing that the firm the mall outsources maintenance of toilets to was responsible. Outsourcing or not, as business or social hosts, we should be gracious enough to supply even passers-by with well-stocked toilets.

Recently, I encountered a strong odour of urine in The Esplanade men's room. I solve such problems in just five minutes by washing down the toilet with bleach or PineSol diluted in water, yet it has persisted in The Esplanade men's room for a long time.

I also noticed that malls in Ang Mo Kio, Yishun, Geylang and (in one case) even

Orchard Road that used to stock toilet paper 10 years ago now no longer do so. In some cases, a few stopped putting toilet paper in their stalls around 2001. Others picked up the habit more recently.

Recently, my nephew visited Singapore and he too commented on the fact that some mall toilets are becoming decrepit and he can no longer take toilet paper for granted in parts of the HDB Hub or in some MRT stations.

Singapore is known around the world for pioneering clean streets, clean toilets and clean public spaces in Asia. It would be a shame if we let the trivial cost of keeping toilets clean and well stocked destroy a hard-won reputation.

Eric J. Brooks

The Straits Times
2 Aug 08

Cleanliness lacking in sports facilities

BEING a Singaporean, I am more than happy to support Singapore's bid to host the Youth Olympics.

However, as a frequent user of some of the sports halls/complexes under the care of the Singapore Sports Council (SSC), I would like to highlight that the condition of basic facilities like toilets within our sports halls is hardly up to the standard required to host such an event.

Pay a visit to the men's toilet at Clementi and Delta sports halls and you will know what I mean.

For example, the floors of the men's toilet at Delta Sports Hall are always wet and there is a strong stench of urine.

At Clementi Sports Hall, the situation is no better.

The soap dispensers have not been working for weeks, and the toilet seats in the cubicles are often filthy with urine.

Is the SSC lacking funds to pay contractors to do basic cleaning of toilets? Or is this just a sign of poor management of facilities?

Chan Kah Fatt

11 Feb 08 - The Straits Times

PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

Question

1) Please provide your name, contact number and email address.

[View All Responses](#)

2) What is your gender?



3) What is your age range?



[View Other Responses](#)

4) Dirty toilets are one of the reasons for not visiting the premises

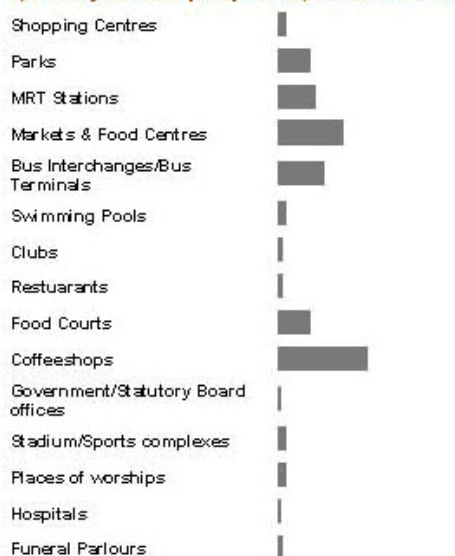


5) What will you do if the toilet seat is dirty? *Select the appropriate



[View Other Responses](#)

6) From your own perspective, where are the dirtiest toilets found?



[View Other Responses](#)

ANNEX C

	Responses Percent	Responses Total
Total Respondents		130
Male	47.4%	63
Female	52.6%	70
Total Respondents		133
7 to 13	2.3%	3
14 to 18	39.8%	53
19 to 25	13.5%	18
26 to 35	14.3%	19
36 to 45	6%	8
45 and above	24.1%	32
Total Respondents		133
Yes	81.2%	108
No	18.8%	25
Total Respondents		133
Squat on the seat	4.6%	8
Place toilet paper on it	19.5%	34
Clean it	32.2%	56
Don't use it	33.3%	58
Complain to cleaner	8.6%	15
Total Respondents		132
Shopping Centres	2%	8
Parks	9.4%	37
MRT Stations	10.9%	43
Markets & Food Centres	18.5%	73
Bus Interchanges/Bus Terminals	13.4%	53
Swimming Pools	2.3%	9
Clubs	1%	4
Restaurants	1%	4
Food Courts	9.1%	36
Coffeeshops	26.1%	103
Government/Statutory Board offices	0.3%	1
Stadium/Sports complexes	2%	8
Places of worships	2%	8
Hospitals	0.5%	2
Funeral Parlours	1%	4
Total Respondents		133

7) How do you rate the cleanliness of local toilets?

Very good (With all the facilities including eco-friendly and user friendly features.)		4.5%	6
Good (With basic facilities including basic amenities)		36.1%	48
Normal (Acceptable but no amenities for example, no toilet paper and soap)		46.6%	62
Bad (Wet, dirty and smelly with no amenities, will avoid using the toilet)		9%	12
Very Bad (Very wet, dirty and smelly with no amenities and damaged facilities)		3.8%	5
Total Respondents			133

8) In your opinion, what is most likely the cause of dirty toilets?

Cleaners		14.6%	26
Irresponsible Users		72.5%	129
Bad Design		11.2%	20
Total Respondents			133

[View Other Responses](#)

9) Please rate your satisfaction about the local toilets.

	Very good (With all the facilities including eco-friendly and user friendly features.)	Good (With basic facilities including basic amenities)	Normal (Acceptable but no amenities for example, no toilet paper and soap)	Bad (Wet, dirty and smelly with no amenities, will avoid using the toilet)	Very Bad (Very wet, dirty and smelly with no amenities and damaged facilities)	
Coffeeshops	0.8% (1)	4.5% (6)	29.3% (39)	37.6% (50)	27.8% (37)	133
Shopping Malls	17.4% (23)	62.1% (82)	16.7% (22)	3% (4)	0.8% (1)	132
Market & Food centres	0.8% (1)	11.5% (15)	43.8% (57)	31.5% (41)	12.3% (16)	130
MRT Stations	6.9% (9)	25.2% (33)	42% (55)	21.4% (28)	4.6% (6)	131
Parks	0.8% (1)	18.6% (24)	43.4% (56)	31.8% (41)	5.4% (7)	129
Government/Statutory Boards	26.9% (35)	56.2% (73)	15.4% (20)	1.5% (2)	0% (0)	130
Hospitals	51.1% (67)	39.7% (52)	8.4% (11)	0% (0)	0.8% (1)	131
Community Centres	6.1% (8)	53% (70)	34.8% (46)	3.8% (5)	2.3% (3)	132
Total Respondents						133

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES LIST FOR CLEANERS

According to the “Advisory to Owners of Public Toilets” by the National Environment Agency (NEA), to carry out proper toilet maintenance, it is recommended cleaners should have the equipment as follows:

- Service tray or cart;
- Premixed glass cleaner (with spray bottle);
- Disinfectant cleaner concentrate;
- Scouring power;
- Stainless steel cleaner (if necessary);
- Toilet bowl swab and container;
- Putty knife;
- Broom;
- Dust-pan corner brush;
- Mop / bucket / wringer;
- Signages such as 'wet floor' and 'closed for cleaning';
- Duster (feather / lamb's wool);
- Clean cloth;
- Paper towels / toilet paper / soap; and
- Gloves

FORUM LETTERS ON PUBLIC URINATING

FORUM

THE STRAITS TIMES MONDAY, MARCH 10 2008

FORUM

THE STRAITS TIMES FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22 2008

Underground
stain on a
cultural icon

A FEW weeks ago, I walked to the Esplanade via the underground passage-way from Citilink Mall. The moment I exited the mall to take the escalator up to the Esplanade underpass, I was greeted the odour of urine.

I thought that perhaps this was a one-off incident. But today, when I took the same route, I encountered the same stench. It seems that the problem of public urination in the area is a persistent one, since it is highly unlikely that the cleaners have not done their job in the past few weeks.

Although it was lunchtime, there were several people sleeping in the open area of the Esplanade underpass. One would assume that these loiterers are the likely culprits, since the Esplanade and Citilink Mall are both closed for the night, barring access to toilet facilities.

It is unacceptable that a world-class cultural hub such as the Esplanade be allowed to exist in such a shameful condition. Since it is visited by locals and tourists alike, public urination there reflects extremely badly on us as Singaporeans. Either toilet facilities should be provided outside of retail and performance hours, or better still, loiterers should be barred from the area.

Sheri Kristen Goh Kwee Hwa (Ms)

Report those who
urinate in public places

I REFER to the letter, "Underground stain on a cultural icon" (Feb 22).

While we ensure the cleanliness of the stretch of underpass connecting Citilink Mall to The Esplanade by routine deployment of cleaning staff, we seek the public's assistance to report misdeeds such as urinating in public places or defacing public property to the Land Transport Authority or the police.

As for those using the underpass as living space, we ask the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports to step in to see how it may help these people.

Suhana Kharudin (Ms)

Manager, Media Relations
Land Transport Authority

THE Restroom Association (Singapore) or RAS agrees that public urination must be stopped at the Esplanade underpass. The RAS believes

one way to address this complaint is to work with the Land Transport Authority (LTA) or the Esplanade management company to stop public urination in the area. After visiting the area, we would like to make some suggestions:

» Clear, specific signs

Clear signs should not only display directions to the nearest toilets, but also indicate the distance.

» Build new public toilets

If public toilets near the Esplanade underpass are not accessible round the clock, additional public toilets should be built to ensure accessibility at all times. A well-devised map for toilet locations will ease the time taken to locate toilets, and thus minimise the risk of public urination.

Tan Puay Hoon (Ms)

President
Restroom Association
(Singapore)

ANNEX F

HAPPY TOILET PROGRAMME SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Address: _____ Date: _____

Done by: _____ Contact number: _____

For official use

VEA ID No: _____

CEA ID No: _____

Please tick the boxes accordingly.

Entrance

Yes No

Q1 There are prominent signages and the entrance looks clean.

☐ ☐

Hand Wash Area

Q2 All the taps at the basin and hand dryers are in working condition.

☐ ☐

Q3 The hand soap dispensers are filled and in working condition.

☐ ☐

Q4 Overall, the hand wash area is clean and tidy, with no litter.

☐ ☐

Water Closet (WC)

Q5 The cubicle door is clean and free of graffiti.

☐ ☐

Q6 The door lock and coat hook are intact and functional.

☐ ☐

Q7 The toilet bowl seat and cover/squat pan is intact and stain free.

☐ ☐

Q8 The WC flush/sensor flush is functional and free of dust and stain.

☐ ☐

Q9 The toilet paper dispenser is intact and functional with toilet paper.

☐ ☐

Q10 Sanitary bin (for ladies only, one in each cubicle) is clean, intact and lined with plastic bag.

☐ ☐

Urinals (for gents only)

Q11 The urinals are intact and functional without chokage.

☐ ☐

Q12 The urinal flush/ sensor flush is functional and free of dust and stain.

☐ ☐

General Areas

Q13 The floor, walls, wall tiles and ceiling are free from dust, stains and litter.

☐ ☐

Q14 The lightings are intact and functional, and of appropriate brightness.

☐ ☐

Q15 The toilet is odour free and the floor is dry.

☐ ☐

Q16 Are there any other areas to improve on?

Q17 Any other comments?

RESTROOM SPECIALIST TRAINING COURSE



Restroom Specialist Training Course

“setting service standards in hygiene and cleanliness for public toilets”

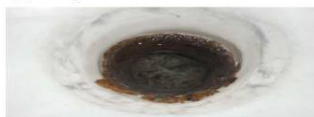


- A course developed in collaboration with Restroom Association of Japan
- Designed to provide cleaners with essential and practical skills to meet growing demands for better service standards
- Only course to equip cleaners with skills to remove odors and stains in urinals and toilet bowls using Japanese methods
- Conducted by the only training organization in Singapore specializing in sanitation
- Supported by SDF, SRP, The Restroom Association (Singapore) and accredited by Singapore Polytechnic
- NEA, JTC and NParks are examples of organizations that have sent their service providers for this course
- Conducted by experienced, multilingual trainers from the cleaning industry
- ▶ Upfront course fee is only \$172 per participant
- ▶ Those who have previously taken the NSRS ‘toilet cleaning course’ are also eligible for funding for this course
- ▶ Certification from Singapore Polytechnic and World Toilet College



▶ Some Features of the Course

Specialized Cleaning: Urine scales are a major cause of disgusting odor and stains in urinals and toilets bowls and the source of customer dissatisfaction and complain. Removing urine scales is an essential skill required of all restroom cleaners. This is the only course providing cleaners with such skills using Japanese methods.



Minor Repairs: The building technician response time to damages in toilets is not always ideal. As such, the restroom cleaner is the ideal person to deal with simple damages, such as choked wash basins and loose toilet seats, to minimize inconvenience to customers. For this reason, Restroom Specialists are also taught semi-skills repairs so that they can help keep restrooms in good working condition.



Restroom Quality Service: Customer Service is one of the important components of this course. Indifferent and sometimes rude cleaners are a major cause of dissatisfaction and vandalism in public restrooms here.

▶ What customers are saying about the course

- ▶ "Following their completion of the course, we have received positive feedback from the cleaners that the course was useful in giving them more professional skills to tackle toilet maintenance.....From the supervisors' point of view, the three staff came out of the program with a very positive mindset ..." – Campaign Cleaning Services
- ▶ Most Singaporeans look down on cleaners, but after attending this course, I feel proud to be a cleaner," said Shanti Chethi

▶ Course Details

- The Restroom Specialist Training Course adopts a "Comprehensive Approach" to restroom maintenance. It comprises of 5 core competencies that are essential for restroom maintenance.
 - ▶ Restroom Service Quality
 - ▶ Daily Cleaning of Restrooms
 - ▶ Minor Repairs
 - ▶ Periodic Cleaning of Restrooms
 - ▶ Specialized Cleaning
- Theory lessons, which make up 25% of the course, include lectures, group discussions and role-plays while practical lessons include demonstrations and hands-on activities.

▶ Course Objectives

- Understand the elements of restroom maintenance and service quality
- Handle various types of cleaning chemicals, tools, and equipment
- Apply effective methods and procedures to maintain restrooms in clean, sanitized and odor-free conditions
- Maintain restroom quality standards and benchmarks
- Provide good customer and consistent level of service
- Perform daily and periodic cleaning tasks
- Perform minor, semi skill, repairs on restroom fixtures and fittings
- Perform specialize cleaning to remove odors and stains in toilet bowls and urinals
- Take ownership and maintain toilets independently

▶ Entry Requirements:

Nil but participants should be physically fit

▶ Course Venue:

19 Toa Payoh West, Singapore 318876.
For 5 or more participants training can be arranged at your work site

▶ Duration of training:

48 hours

▶ Duration of assessment:

Approximately 1.5 hours per participant

▶ Time of training:

Full day or Half day

▶ Course fees (before funding):

\$700 / participant

▶ Course fees after SDF EASYNET funding:

For Singaporeans and PRs' with 'A' levels and below

- Above 40 years of age: \$172.00 per participant
- Below 40 years of age: \$364.00 per participant

▶ SRP funding (absentee payroll):

For Singaporeans and PRs' with 'A' levels and below

- Above 40 years of age: 90% of hourly basic salary
- Others: 80% of basic hourly pay (capped at \$4.50 and \$4.00 per trainee hour respectively)



For enquiries / registration:



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ANNEX H

RISK ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL STATEMENT - SAMPLE

Method Statement	
Client details	Name: Company ABC Pte Ltd
Client Site address	Contact Person of ABC Pte Ltd
Activity –risk	To clean office premises safely
Implementation and Control of Risk	
Hazard Task – Risk	Method of Control
Removal of debris within building	Debris will be removed in appropriate refuse sacks with care taken not to overload sacks or cleaners.
Wet mopping in restrooms	Wet mopping will be appropriately signed and care taken by trained toilet cleaners.
Site Control	
Client Awareness	The client shall be kept aware of the progress of the work at all stages and immediately made aware of any problems or hazards that may occur.

HAPPY TOILET SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMME



1 Often than not, we hear people commenting that Singapore's public restrooms are dirty, smelly and wet, especially in common places such as hawker centres.

2 However, whose responsibility is it - the cleaners or users or both? Users play an equally important role in keeping the restrooms clean; clean restrooms are not merely the responsibility of cleaners. As a user, by practicing simple toilet etiquette, the restrooms can be a cleaner and more hygiene environment for everyone to use.

3 As such, we need to groom Singaporeans from young to be more gracious and considerate toilet users. We need to start educating the young - the future of our society - about good toilet etiquette and inculcating the right social values in them.

4 This is especially important since young children are usually susceptible to harmful bacteria and virus. Good toilet habits such as washing your hands with soap after use are good preventive measures in protecting themselves against contagious diseases such as SARS, HFMD (Hand Foot & Mouth Disease) and norovirus gastroenteritis (gastric flu).

5 To reach out to the young, RAS (a Community Involvement Programme approved organisation) has initiated a public health educational programme for the primary and secondary school students.

6 The **Happy Toilet School Education (HTSE)** programme is an ongoing fun educational initiative that is set out to achieve the following objectives:

- Inculcate Good Toilet Etiquette, Personal Hygiene Habits and Social Responsibility in the Students;
- Raise the Cleanliness Standards and Overall Image of School Restrooms; and
- Support the 'Singapore's OK' Programme for Schools.

7 There are **five** phases for primary schools and **four** phases for secondary schools.

Primary schools:

- **Phase 1** - A workshop for 15 to 40 Restroom Ambassadors, handpicked by you and other teachers in charge. It would be a 45 minute to 1 hour training workshop involving the teaching of hygiene and responsibilities as Restroom Ambassadors along with offering ideas on how the restrooms can be decorated;
- **Phase 2** - A 20 to 25 minute assembly talks for the school educating them on toilet hygiene and germs and bacteria;
- **Phase 3** - The LOO activity whereby the Restroom Ambassadors along with the chosen classes or clubs come together to plan, and perform the chosen activity - decorating your school restrooms. This could take between 1 to 4 months depending on the number of restrooms your school has chosen to decorate (minimum of 2);
- **Phase 4** - Audit and certification. One of us would come down to audit and certify the cleanliness and decorations of the restrooms that are done up; and
- **Phase 5** - Recognition of achievement - Presentation of plaques and certificate.

Secondary schools:

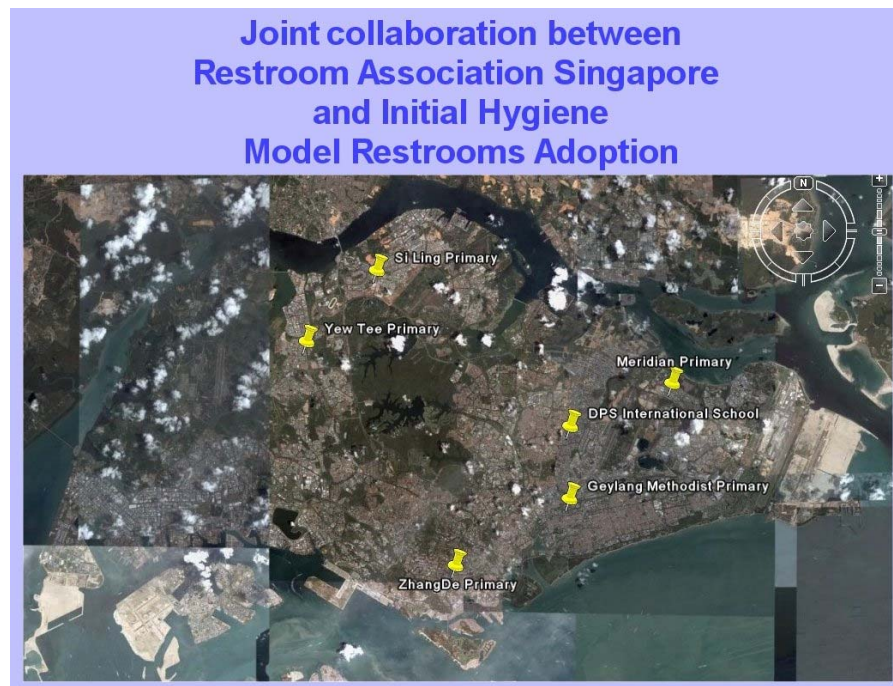
- **Phase1** - Workshop for 15 to 40 Restroom Ambassadors, handpicked by you and other teachers in charge. It would be a 45 minute to 1 hour training workshop involving the teaching of hygiene and responsibilities as Restroom Ambassadors along with offering ideas on how the restrooms can be decorated;
- **Phase2** - The LOO activity whereby the Restroom Ambassadors along with the chosen classes or clubs come together to plan, and perform the chosen activity - decorating your school restrooms. This could take between 1 to 4 months depending on the number of restrooms your school has chosen to decorate (minimum of 2);
- **Phase3** - Audit and certification. One of us would come down to audit and certify the cleanliness and decorations of the restrooms that are done up; and
- **Phase4** - Recognition of achievement - Presentation of plaques and certificate.

8 Supported by the National Environment Agency (NEA), the HTSE programme has improved the cleanliness and users' behaviour in many schools. Since its official launch in July 2005, more than 200 primary and secondary schools have actively participated in this fun and enriching programme.

MODEL RESTROOMS @ SCHOOLS PROJECT

1 From April 2009, RAS and its valued partner, Initial Hygiene initiated the Model Restrooms @ Schools initiative successfully launching it at 6 different schools. These schools were carefully selected by RAS based on its valued contribution to our school outreach programmes. Initial Hygiene generously came in as our partner to adopt 2 restrooms (1 boys and 1 girls) situated at areas of the highest traffic performing a thorough deep clean of each restroom and installing important hardware such as a better placed hand dryer, soap dispensers and toilet roll dispensers with the added commitment to maintain the hardware throughout the course of this initiative. A further assembly talk and mass hand washing exercise is currently being conducted at each school for students to be well versed with the hand washing steps and the importance of incorporating it into their daily lives.

2 The schools that were chosen were strategically selected from each of the 5 Community Development Council (CDC) areas along with adding a private school. They are Zhangde Primary School (Central CDC), Si Ling Primary School (North West CDC), Meridian Primary School (North East CDC), Yew Tee Primary School (South West CDC), Geylang Methodist Primary School (South East CDC) and DPS International School. These schools have reaffirmed their commitment to public toilet hygiene and towards maintaining their lucrative status as a Model Restroom example for other schools to follow. As the plaque states outside each of those model restrooms: 'Welcome, A Pleasant Experience Awaits!'



SCHOOL AND PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

A NEW SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Introduction

1 The S.T.A.R. Awards Programme for pre primary, primary and secondary schools is the next evolution of restroom and hygiene education in schools. Sustaining Toilets as Restrooms or STAR adopts a more holistic approach that replaces the previous Happy Toilet School Education programme. The Restroom Association has identified STAR as an imperative answer to meet schools' needs in tackling perennially dirty toilets. Converting students, teachers and the school culture to accept that toilets need to be treated as quality restrooms is the key to sustaining hygiene and social etiquette amongst daily stakeholders. The introduction of STAR was due to the incorporation of feedback RAS received about the need to ensure that quality education programmes are matched with quality restrooms and properly trained cleaners. This programme also follows the mission of the LOO Campaign which is to spread equal focus on the owners & operators, cleaners & contractors and users.

Project Details

2 The RAS network of over 250 pre-primary, primary and secondary schools will be tapped into for participation in the STAR awards programme. The school management and the teacher in charge will be heavily involved when introducing three key areas of focus; implementing and education and awareness programme for students, checking the standards of the cleaners and assessing the design of the restrooms.

3 The process and execution of each area of focus are as follows:

- Education and awareness – The theme of ACTIONS or Appreciating Clean Toilets in Our Neighbourhood and School will be adopted via a series of assembly talks and workshops. The teacher in charge will coordinate with RAS on a timeline and identify a set of students to undertake a project to raise awareness of restroom hygiene and social graciousness. The identified students would engage in projects such as decorating their school toilets, staging exhibitions or presentations, adopt a Welfare Association or coffee shop outside of school to promote restroom cleanliness and / or create games, sketches, educational material, etc. The main outcome of students engaging in these community service projects is to encourage peer-to-peer teaching letting students learn from one another about good etiquette practices. RAS staff will guide students during the process and assess their viability upon completion using internal rubrics of assessment. The assembly talk conducted by

RAS staff serves to spread awareness on a large scale. There will be interactive opportunities and prizes on offer integrated with the talks and workshops to encourage student responses. The school must complete all components (Assembly Talk, Workshop and project) within one calendar year in order to have completed the education phase;

- Standards of cleaners – RAS staff will work with the Operations Manager of each school to check the qualifications and cleaning routines of all cleaners of the school. This phase is necessary to ensure that only RSTC certified cleaners are provided by the appointed cleaning contractor and to ensure that they diligently follow a proper cleaning schedule. Once these checks have been made and verified, the school passes this phase and qualifies for the minimum of a SILVER STAR (refer to assessment criteria); and
- Design of restrooms – First class education facilities need to have quality restrooms. All schools need to be accountable for the type of restroom standards they provide on their premises. Using the RAS developed self assessment checklist, RAS staff and volunteer eco assessors will check all the restrooms in each participating school to ensure that each restroom is functional and user friendly. Only when all restrooms pass the checklist criteria will the school then be eligible for the GOLD STAR (refer to assessment criteria).

4 Here is the breakdown of how schools are accredited:

- To be awarded the BRONZE STAR – The school will need to successfully complete the education component;
- To be awarded the SILVER STAR – The school will need to successfully complete the education component and have cleaners that are RSTC certified;
- To be awarded the GOLD STAR – The school will need to successfully complete the education component, have cleaners that are RSTC certified and have ALL their restrooms passing the standards of the RAS self assessment checklist; and
- Schools will receive their respective plaques upon successful completion and audit of their involvement in the STAR awards programme and their achievement will be published in our RAS website in a similar format to the LOO map. All awarded have a **validity period of one year only** and schools wishing to renew their involvement have to once again participate in the following year. To acknowledge sustained achievement, schools that are awarded GOLD in successive years will be awarded the PLATINUM STAR.

Identified benefits of STAR

6 The STAR awards serve to recognise schools that dedicate efforts to ensure a quality standard of restroom cleanliness for its students and teachers. Aside from promoting user awareness and social responsibility, there is a growing need for checks on school facilities and the quality of service provided by cleaners. As stated in the introduction, feedback was considered in the creation of STAR. This feedback stems from parents and students who have feedback that restroom facilities, especially toilets in high use areas occasionally are not clean enough. Upon further investigation, the schools that were identified had actually completed a round of the HTSE programme. This proves that education is not the only way of improving good restroom culture in schools. Stressing the need to spread the focus equally on the other two areas, RAS is confident that by the end of the next forthcoming financial year, its report of assessment will be encouraging.

A PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Introduction

1 Providing a quality education and awareness programme is paramount to any goal or objective seeking fruition. The pursuit of influencing hearts and minds to adopt good toilet culture and refrain from unhealthy practices has been a challenging one. Catering to many different social groups and introducing customized talks to emphasize on related interests is something RAS has been contending with. RAS has also acknowledged that talks and lectures to adults, particularly senior citizens do not always fulfil the desired learning objectives and outcomes due to a myriad of reasons. Embracing this shortcoming, RAS intends to approach the heartland areas via the frequenting of places that people identify with. A series of innovative awareness programmes are now ready for execution with the support of a number of owners and operators. F&B owners and operators, regional libraries, construction sites and hawker centres are now joining RAS to educate their patrons to ensure that their restrooms maintain at least a 3-star HTP standard. Hence RAS proposes an improved public awareness programme that moves away from the traditional lecture format to make hygiene education messages more impactful and relevant.

Project details

2 This new public awareness drive sees RAS going to its partner organisations like the F&B outlets such as coffee shops, National Library Board (NLB) and other highly frequented establishments to educate customers and users on social graciousness.

3 For example, RAS will go to a coffee shop and distribute tissue packets which have messages like “This coffee shop has just achieved a 3-star rated toilet. With your help this rating can be maintained.” Or, “This coffee shop is currently undergoing an audit for toilet cleanliness. Help us achieve this goal.” Along with giving tissue packets,

fridge magnets and car decals, souvenirs that will subsequently bear more prominence will be distributed to the customers. RAS believes that these subtle messages can do a better job than a talk or a lecture. While the public is being educated, food vendors and servers will also go through a talk on basic hygiene. This is to ensure that a high standard of food preparation is maintained. Schools will also be roped in whereby students from neighbouring schools 'adopt' their coffee shops and help by either distributing the collaterals or designing and putting up their own posters in and around the coffee shops. This integrated effort will see awareness generated across the different age groups.

4 Through a series of meetings with NLB, there will be a series of awareness programmes at a few libraries. Awareness material exhibited during the World Toilet Summit and Expo will be brought for public viewing at regional libraries. RAS will also have volunteers stationed to provide education material and teach people who come to view the exhibits. Regional libraries are synonymous with having good crowds especially on weekends and RAS hopes to develop a comprehensive awareness package that on its own can serve as a good educational tool for people of all ages.