

# Coffee shop loo gets five stars

By DARYL CHIN

FOR the first time, a coffee shop toilet clinched the five-star award at the Let's Observe Ourselves (LOO) award ceremony yesterday.

Nestled in the Tampines heartland, in a coffee shop called the 21 Street Eating House, this toilet ticked all the right boxes - no litter or pungent odour, a cubicle for the handicapped and even eco-friendly features such as sensor-activated flushing and water-saving taps.

Mr K.B. Soh, owner of the 20-year-old coffee shop, said he has always been conscientious about cleanliness, particularly that of toilets.

The 63-year-old owner forked out about \$10,000 to do up the toilet.

"I even have an aquarium at the entrance of the restroom to liven up the place," he said in Mandarin.

Besides the coffee shop, there were 20 other award recipients at the launch of the three-day LOO Carnival, organised by the Restroom Association of Singapore (RAS) and held at the National Library building.

These were for a variety of categories which recognised organisations as well as individuals who advocate clean



The toilet at 21 Street Eating House in Tampines is the first coffee shop toilet to be given a five-star award by the Restroom Association of Singapore. It is clean and has eco-friendly features such as water-saving taps. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

restrooms.

Past winners include organisations like Koufu and the Singapore Zoo.

Speaking at the event, Dr Amy Khor, Minister of State for the Environment and Water Resources, said while poor toilet sanitation is no longer a major issue, sustained cleanliness and hygiene remain a challenge.

"While the Government will continue to do its part to enhance and sus-

tain the cleanliness levels, we cannot work in isolation."

Echoing her thoughts, RAS president Tan Puay Hoon said a high standard of restroom cleanliness is possible only if owners, contractors, cleaners and users play their part.

Ms Tan has submitted an 80-page report, which includes toilet etiquette guidelines for users, to the Government for consideration.

While the report will be released publicly only later this month, she revealed some of its contents yesterday.

"While there have been a lot of improvements in shopping centres, the challenge for next year and our area of focus will be coffee shops and how to improve their (toilets') standards."

There are about 30,000 restrooms in Singapore, of which 1,200 are located at coffee shops.