

The Grand Moofti Speaks

Imran provides a Pakistani-Singaporean's perspective on Singapore, Pakistan and other subjects of relevance ... to him.

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[Orchard Road: Where Gucci Bags and Clean Toilets Meet!](#)

In many countries public toilets are avoided like the plague. In Singapore, they are often clean enough to eat in.



Other than [Singapore's strict laws on chewing gum](#) the city is also known for its clean environment. Public toilets get special attention, as they rightly should.

Tourists wandering around Orchard Road are as spoilt for choice with toilets as they are with branded goods.

The [Restroom Association of Singapore](#) (RAS) seems to have been busy since it was established in 1998. Yes, there is an organization in Singapore focused specifically on the hygiene standards of public toilets!

As the RAS website suggests:

The challenge for RAS is to meet the rising expectations of users and elevate the standards of design and cleanliness. We must investigate and find out the root cause of dirty toilets. We must identify the needs of various users including tourists and foreign workers so as to promote better designed toilets that cater to these needs. We must constantly source for the best practices in cleanliness, design and maintenance of public toilets and review our local standards.

It's probably not too difficult to determine the root cause of dirty toilets but let's not take anything away from the valuable public service RAS performs.

The cleanliness of public restrooms is serious business. It is a simple way of measuring a society's progress and provides clues about an

individual's respect for communal spaces. A public toilet is the most basic type of common space.



Many of us intuitively measure the attractiveness of a particular public area, by the quality of its toilet. Airport transit lounges, shopping malls and even airlines are preferred or avoided based on a subjective 'toilet ranking' exercise we undertake, consciously or subconsciously.

To many, knowing there is a clean toilet nearby provides tremendous peace of mind. To some, perhaps even more than a good night's sleep.

The science and art of loo management is Greek to me.

A liberal arts college education had me reading the classics but studies like "Ascending the Loo Ladder" and "A Guide to Better Public Toilet Design and Maintenance" did not make the grade as required reading.

Toilet management is a certifiable skill! For those who enjoy displaying certificates on office walls please consider the Certified Volunteer Eco-Assessor Programme. They *"play a vital role toward the sustainability of clean public toilets."*

Getting certified and reading the correct literature will help any individual aspiring to win the annual Loo Award. The Loo Award, which was launched in 2009, is designed to *"recognise any organisations or individuals who have contributed to help Singapore achieve a world recognised standard of restroom cleanliness."*

I have no idea what the Loo Award trophy looks like.

Happy toilets are what the RAS is all about. The RAS publishes [a Singapore map based on the Happy Toilet Programme](#). The Happy Toilet programme uses a 3, 4 and 5 stars grading system to rank public toilets.



It is all part of their efforts to ensure that 70% or more of Singapore's public toilets are (certifiably) clean by 2010.

Toilets don't just become happy. They are made happy by the people maintaining them. Next time you walk into a clean toilet please spare a thought for those who help keep them happy.

The RAS 2010 goal of achieving 70% clean toilets may not be as lofty as [Malaysia's Vision 2020](#) but it is surely attainable.

And for Singaporeans just as important.

Posted by Imran Ahmed at 20:40 

Labels: [Restroom Association of Singapore public toilets](#)