

Loo-etiquette campaign takes time to bear fruit

WE REFER to the letter, "Public toilets need improvement" (*my paper*, Dec 24, 2008), by Mr Nelson Quah.

The Restroom Association (Singapore) (RAS) agrees with Mr Quah that we should continue to work with various organisations, including the National Environment Agency (NEA), to improve the condition of public toilets.

This was the reason behind the inception of an Inter-Agencies Working Committee (IAWC), as part of our vision and long-term plan to achieve "Every Restroom like Changi Airport".

RAS co-chaired its first IAWC meeting with the World Toilet Organisation (WTO) in October last year, and various organisations, including NEA, were present to pledge their commitment to propose and implement solutions.

We also launched the LOO Campaign on Nov 19 in conjunction with World Toilet Day, with the aim of meeting our target of at least 70 per cent three-star Happy Toilets by 2010.

Our three-star rating will ensure toilets are kept dry, odour and litter-free with working toilet facilities and basic amenities such as soap and toilet paper.

We have been working closely with toilet owners and operators to ensure that they continue to provide clean and functional public toilets.

NEA is a participating organisation in the LOO Campaign, and we will work closely with it to meet our target.

However, this will take time, especially when it comes to the issue of vandalism, which cannot be solved simply by asking for better behaviour from users.

Other developed countries have managed to solve this problem through having permanent attendants, designing anti-vandal fixtures, installing cameras at wash areas (but not in cubicles), enforcing early closing hours and ensuring culprits are dealt with.

Another aspect of the LOO Campaign is the importance of educating users on toilet etiquette, personal hygiene and public health with our public and school-education programmes.

For more information on our school-education programmes, please visit our website at www.toilet.org.sg

As the "LOO" in LOO Campaign does not refer only to toilets, but is also an acronym for "Let's Observe Ourselves", we would like to urge all toilet users to start paying more attention

to and adopting good toilet etiquette to ensure the cleanliness of public toilets.

By doing so, we will be a step closer to becoming a gracious society.

We would like to invite like-minded people such as Mr Quah to join us in fostering a gracious society.

The public can e-mail info@toilet.org.sg for volunteer opportunities, or share their views online or download our feedback from our website.

They can also e-mail us at mysay@toilet.org.sg or SMS to 9770-LOOS (9770-5667).

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