



Media Release

**RELEASE OF THE INTER-AGENCY WORKING COMMITTEE (IAWC) REPORT ON
PUBLIC RESTROOMS & LAUNCH OF LOO (LET'S OBSERVE OURSELVES) @
HEARTLANDS**

*A 3-year blueprint on public restrooms and public awareness programme to remind users to
adopt the right restroom etiquette at heartland areas*

The Restroom Association (Singapore) or RAS releases a 70-page Inter-Agency Working Committee (refer to **Annex A** for the list of organisations) or IAWC report (<http://www.toilet.org.sg/docs/IAWC/report.pdf>), which is also a 3-year blueprint on public restrooms.

The inception of the IAWC in October 2008 was part of a long-term plan to achieve clean public toilets. Co-chaired by the RAS and World Toilet Organization, three sub-committees namely the Owners & Operators, Contractors & Cleaners and Users, were formed to study problems persisting with dirty toilets. Each sub-committee met quarterly to brainstorm for solutions and updated each other on the findings and recommendations (refer to **Annex B**). RAS consolidated the details and submitted the report in September 2010.

In its bid to support one of the report's recommendations on public awareness campaign, RAS launches the first LOO (Let's Observe Ourselves) @ Heartlands at 21 Street Eating House – the first coffeeshop with 5-star Happy Toilet – in Tampines. This new initiative begins at F&B establishments where pocket tissue packets specially-designed with restroom-etiquette messages (refer to **Annex C**) are distributed **only to toilet visitors** during peak hours from 12pm – 2pm and/or 5pm – 7pm for a period of 3 to 7 days.

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About Restroom Association (Singapore)

The vision of the Restroom Association (Singapore) or RAS is Clean Public Toilets for Everyone. Started in 1998 as a non-profit organisation, RAS is dedicated to promoting the cleanliness, design and functionality of public toilets in Singapore. It serves the community by educating the general public about toilet etiquette.

Some of the programmes or activities – supported by the National Environment Agency (NEA) – initiated and conducted by RAS include the Happy Toilet Programme, Happy Toilet School Education programme, Inter-Agency Working Committee, Eco-Assessor Programme, LOO (Let's Observe Ourselves) Campaign 2008-2010, LOO (Let's Observe Ourselves) Awards. RAS is a strategic partner in national community events like Clean & Green Singapore and is also a founding member of the World Toilet Organization and the Keep Singapore Beautiful Movement.

Glossary of Chinese Terms (In alphabetical order)

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Restroom Association (Singapore) | 新加坡卫浴文化协会 |
| 2. Inter-Agency Working Committee | 跨部门委员会 |
| 3. LOO (Let's Observe Ourselves) @ Heartlands | 卫浴文化在邻里 |
| 4. Happy Toilet | 康乐公厕 |

ANNEX A

Inter-Agency Working Committee

Owners & Operators Sub-Committee Members

(In alphabetical order)

- Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (Observer)
- Housing and Development Board
- JTC Corporation
- Kheng Keow Coffee Merchants Restaurant & 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 & Exhibition Centre

Contractors & Cleaners Sub-Committee Members

(In alphabetical order)

- 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

Users Sub-Committee Members

(In alphabetical order)

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

ANNEX B

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*

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

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 6 - 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*

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 8 - 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	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,

		<p>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 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 provided) as</p>

		<p>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	<p>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> <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> <ol 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 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>

ANNEX C

RESTROOM ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE)

CHOPE
but not a dirty toilet seat
来时匆匆 去时冲冲

LET'S BIN IT!

www.toilet.org.sg 6297 9824
 info@toilet.org.sg 9770 LOOS (5667)

LOO Let's Observe Ourselves
 @HEARTLANDS

RESTROOM ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE)

Enter in a rush
Leave with a flush
来时匆匆 去时冲冲

LET'S BIN IT!

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