



A WORLD FIRST IN RECYCLING

We wanted to differentiate ourselves through our green efforts and we created the world's first eyewear made of recycled materials. All our outlets have a full circle recycling system where used spectacles, contact lens cases and solution bottles are collected for recycling. The recycled materials are used to manufacture the LinkSkin range of eco-friendly eyewear.

Mr Yang Wah Kiang, managing director of Nanyang Optical

ONG DAI LIN

dailin@mediacorp.com.sg

BACK in 2001, a long-scheduled plan to reclaim Chek Jawa turned the little-known wetlands in Pulau Ubin into a cause celebre after nature lovers spoke up for its unique ecosystem.

A movement was even created to have people visit Chek Jawa before it was closed. Newspapers devoted much space to the Chek Jawa debate and papers were written on the value of the wetlands to Singapore.

The authorities – which had planned to start reclamation work on Chek Jawa in December 2001 – eventually decided to delay the development of the area for 10 years. Some eight years after Chek Jawa – seen as a major success for the environmental cause in Singapore – how are the environment groups here faring?

TODAY's checks with several organisations suggest that there are now more green groups, more green volunteers and greater awareness on green issues.

"The Government has been more open to discussions. Five years ago, they were not so friendly towards environment groups," said Mr Grant Pereira, founder of The Green Volunteers.

He cited the whale sharks case as an example. "The Green Volunteers led an initiative to dissuade the casino Resorts World Sentosa not to follow up on their proposal to bring in whale sharks as an attraction ... and the Government decided to withdraw the whale sharks."

At the public level, there has been a notable increase in awareness of environmental issues. "It used to be rare that people talk about the environment. There is now greater



Once an unfamiliar site, the Chek Jawa wetlands are now championed by many. TODAY FILE PHOTO

awareness," said Singapore Environment Council executive director Howard Shaw.

Mr Shaw, who has 60 to 70 active volunteers in his group, has seen about a 20-per cent increase in the number of volunteers in recent years. "There is definitely a trend in volunteerism," he said.

The number of green groups springing up in Singapore has also risen.

Mr Pereira attributed this to greater awareness of environmental issues and to the "fashionable to be green" factor. According to his estimate, there are about 30 environment groups, compared to about 10 five years ago.

And there's still room for growth, noted Mr Wilson Ang, head of Eco Singapore. "Environment issues cover a wide spectrum and

while some non-governmental organisations here overlap, there is still space for special interest groups ... like groups to push for sustainable buildings."

Given the greater awareness coupled with more public education on the subject, are Singaporeans doing enough for the environment? Mr Ang said: "There are positive signs of more socially responsible action taken by the average Singaporean to protect the environment, particularly among the younger generation."

However, some, like Mr Tay Lai Hock, believe that Singaporeans still have a long way to go. Mr Tay, president of the Ground-Up Initiative (GUI), cited the rising numbers of litterbugs as one example: "Despite years of education, Singaporeans remain apathetic

towards our general environment and take many things for granted."

He asked: "What about the use of disposable plates, chopsticks, spoon, cups, etc in so many hawker centres and food courts? We need to reduce such usage dramatically."

Going forward, some environment groups believed that they need to work closer with each other to make a greater impact.

Mr Pereira said: "Environment groups should close ranks, like meeting regularly to discuss a general strategy to get the Government to be more receptive, and to reach out to more people, like having island-wide programmes."

Another strategy is to embrace new media to promote the green cause. Mr Ang said: "We should embrace and harness the various forms of new media, in addition to the existing traditional ones, to reach out to even more people."

Where officialdom is concerned, a spokeswoman for the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) said that it "values" feedback from environment groups and the public.

"For instance, focus group discussions, public forums and dialogue sessions were held to discuss ideas for the sustainable development blueprint launched by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development in April this year," she told TODAY.

"Representatives from the Singapore Environment Council and Nature Society Singapore were invited as panelists to share their views on how the 3P (public, private and people) sectors could work together to contribute to a sustainable Singapore."

Such exchange of ideas can "promote a shared sense of ownership in our environment", the spokeswoman added.

AVALON®
Detox • Cleansing • Renew
多层安全排毒 • 内外焕然一新

Congratulation to AVALON® Multiple Detox Capsules For Being Awarded NTUC Unity Popular Choice 2007 & 2008, Guardian Preferred Choice 2008, 2009 and Watsons Best Selling Award 2008

Detoxification, Beauty and Slimming

Your **TRUSTED BRAND**

No. 1 Detox Product in Singapore

Ms. Cheryl Li, who successfully used AVALON Aloe Multiple Detox Capsules to shed excess weight.

After 47kg

Before 66kg

Local Artiste Mr. Chow Chuan Hee, who lost weight through AVALON Aloe Multiple Detox Capsules

"Thanks to AVALON Aloe Multiple Detox Capsules, my constipation is completely cured! My weight dropped from 85kg to 75kg and my friends also noticed that I'm now fitter, and have better complexion."

After 75kg

Before 85kg

Eat too much? Sleep late? Body out of shape? Bloated? Bowel irregularity? Fatigue? Skin problems? Let AVALON solve your problems!

Big Savings

Super Value Pack (60s x 2 + 20s)

- **Clears away** accumulated waste & impurities
- **Promotes** bowel regularity
- **Relieves** the discomfort associated with bloated feeling
- **Improves** facial complexion
- **Helps** breakdown fat deposits

AVALON® Aloe Multiple Detox Capsules Hotline: 6515 9818 www.hibeau.com

guardian | JOHN LITTLE Living | OG | Unity | watsons