Cool water exhibits at aquatic centre

BY ANNABELLE LIANG

VISITORS to the newly opened Aquatic Science Centre will get to be right in the midst of freshwater research.

They will see a wave-like rooftop that captures rainfall easily, and a channel, known as Bio-flume, that simulates flow conditions in a canal on a smaller scale.

The outdoor research facility was opened by Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, yesterday, who said it would inspire the young, and play a role in public education.

The S$6.4-million facility spans an area of about 6,700 sq m – about two thirds that of a soccer field – and will be open to the public from 8.30am to 6pm on weekdays.

They will also get to view water-treatment processes, where filters such as sand and crabshell are used.

The centre is located in 3 Albert Winsemius Lane in Clementi.

It was set up by The Singapore Delft-Water Alliance (SDWA), comprising National University of Singapore, national water agency PUB and Dutch water institute Deltares.

Information from research at the facility may also be used to treat rain water under the PUB’s Active, Beautiful, Clean (ABC) Waters Programme.

Mr Khoo Teng Chye, chief executive of PUB, said: “Having a centre that can mimic nature will help us find sustainable solutions to urban freshwater management.

“This is important as our water-catchment area will grow to about 90 per cent in the future.”

SDWA director Vladan Baborie, 50, said the centre’s displays will become more interactive in the future, so that the public can try out various water exhibits.

The National Environment Agency and Deltares has also started a two-year project called Project Neptune, which aims to deploy a national-level water-monitoring and forecast system for Singapore’s coast.

The project, which will be completed by April 2013, involves the installation of sensory buoys that help detect chemicals, which will prove useful during events such as oil spills.

At a separate event earlier yesterday, Dutch ambassador Johannes Jansing launched the Singapore-Netherlands Water Challenge, a global competition for young researchers.

The annual competition will pose water-related challenges to participants, who will have to write an essay containing solutions. The winner of the challenge, which will take place in September, will receive the Singapore-Netherlands Sustainability Award and funding to embark on an internship project. The winner will be announced early next year.

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Rainfall: 降雨量 jiàng yǔ liàng
Mimic: 模仿 mó fǎng
Buoy: 浮标 fú bāo
Internship: 实习培训期 shí xiào pí xùn qī