

# KERATAN AKHBAR

NAMA AKHBAR: THE STAR

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## Inclusive solution to a smoking issue

I REFER to the reports "Eateries may build designated smoking areas, says Zuraida" (*The Star*, Jan 7) and "Owners, smokers back smoking zones" (Jan 8).

I fully support the government's call for restaurants to have designated smoking areas outside of the premises. It shows that the government has been listening and considering the feedback from F&B operators who claim that their business has been significantly affected by the smoking ban.

For all we know, the government could have not agreed to having the designated smoking areas. However, the best solution to any issue is one that includes the directly affected parties, in this case the F&B operators and smokers themselves.

Having designated smoking areas will encourage smokers to step outside and puff away (thus respecting the smoking ban) as well as maintain the businesses of F&B operators in an already challenging economic situation.

Although I sincerely hope all smokers would kick the habit for good, I disagree with the criticisms by the public that "we are taking one step forward, two steps back" with having designated smoking areas.

I challenge the critics to view examples from other countries with similar bans. Designated smoking areas is not a novel concept, unfortunately.

As for the smokers themselves, let's hope that one day they will find the courage to seek smoking cessation treatments.

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