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STUBBING OUT

With measures against public tobacco use, Chinese cities such as Xi'an are taking on the challenge of smoking dependency

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Xi'an, the capital of Northwest China's Shaanxi province, has become the latest city in China to announce tough new measures to curb the smoking of tobacco in public and cut the number of smoking-related diseases that afflict the country's population and economy.

Effective since Nov 1, smoking is banned from all indoor public places in Xi'an, famous the world over for its Terracotta Warriors. The ban will also prohibit smoking in some outdoor public venues.

The city joins Beijing, Shanghai and a handful of second- and third-tier cities that have banned smoking in public places — part of a long-running campaign against tobacco use in a country which is the largest producer and consumer of tobacco in the world.

"We are thrilled to see that Xi'an, one of the (world's) most famous tourism cities, has passed a 100 percent smoke-free law, with no loopholes and no exemptions," said Dr Gauden Galea, the World Health Organization's (WHO) representative in China.

"It means that the nearly 10 million citizens and 180 million visitors every year will be completely protected from the deadly effects of secondhand smoke," Galea said in a statement to *China Daily Asia Weekly*.

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