



On the road

Wherefore art thou, inmate 04682?

THERE are some bizarre prisoner rehabilitation plans going on around the world, and now Queensland can proudly claim its own. According to the University of Queensland: "The intrigue and drama of Shakespeare's plays will help prisoners control their raw emotions when a University of Queensland academic leads a world-first program in a Queensland prison." Young male prisoners at Borallon Correctional Centre will have the opportunity to learn and perform scenes from Shakespeare's iconic works, in a pilot program to start this month. Anyone with even the lightest knowledge of Shakespeare will know that there are a few knives, poison and a bit of killing that goes on in his work. One wouldn't think giving prisoners access to these sorts of themes would help them calm down. Anyway, a key philosophy behind the program was that "violence begins when the words run out". Project coordinator Dr Rob Pensalfini, artistic director of the Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble, said "Shakespeare is in a league of his own when it comes to giving everyday people the means to elegantly articulate the most complex of emotions". He said acting out the murder and mayhem of Shakespeare's plays was very different to being physically violent in real life. The program may just work a treat, but if this time next year there are reports of a repeat offender who scrawls verses of Shakespeare at every crime scene, it won't be hard to join the dots.