



Borallon inmates given bard labour

SHAKESPEARE once wrote that "some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them".

While inmates at Borallon Correctional Centre won't be forced to participate in a new program to begin next month, project co-ordinator Dr Rob Pensalfini said it was an opportunity not to be missed.

He said up to 12 young male prisoners would learn and perform passages from Shakespeare in a world-first program called Arts in Community Enhancement (ACE), funded by the University of Queensland and the Queensland Law Society.

"People who have studied violence for some years say that violence begins when the words run out," Dr Pensalfini said.

"Shakespeare always seems to have the words for every human experience.

"It's a tool for working with any marginalised community, often people who are disenfranchised from communication skills."

American Brent Blair will train facilitators at UQ Ipswich and spend three intensive weeks with the prisoners, who will then take part in four months of weekly sessions.

Mr Blair founded the Theatre of the Oppressed Centre, which has been using theatre to empower disadvantaged people in America for about 30 years, Dr Pensalfini said.

Participants will learn works which are relevant to them, and then perform the plays before other prisoners, prison staff and family members.