

Prohibition doesn't work

Congratulations to Elizabeth Farrelly for daring to state the obvious ("Locked into a losing war, we're as safe as houses", May 21). I, too, have had all my valuable belongings burgled, probably by junkies, according to the police.

I am amazed how much of this pain people are prepared to tolerate while refusing to consider the regulated legalisation of drugs. We are burgled, we pay a fortune to maintain bursting jails, and police waste their time busting pot smokers instead of addressing violent crime.

Portugal decriminalised all drugs in 2001. A study by the **Cato Institute** shows use of cannabis by teenagers there has plummeted, and drug-related transmission of HIV has fallen drastically. Meanwhile the United States, the home of prohibition, has some of the highest rates of drug use in the world. With 5 per cent of the world's population but 25 per cent of the world's prisoners, most of them drug-related, the tide is slowly turning against prohibition even there.

It didn't work in Al Capone's day and it doesn't work now.

Michael Gormly Woolloomooloo