



# Christmas joy given is joy received



**MABURY'S VIEW**  
 Graham Mabury

"I HATE Christmas!" was the last thing I expected to hear on *Nightline* in "the season to be jolly". For me, "Tis the season" that challenges both budget and waistline celebrating with the priceless gift of family and friends.

For others like my caller, Christmas compounds their pain and isolation. Life going on so boisterously and extravagantly seems at best incomprehensible and at worst cruel.

A torrent of emotions cascades around the bereaved. The Compassionate Friends understand. As bereaved parents they have ridden these rapids before. They know what it is to have your

fragile craft capsize. At Christmas they are there, determined to turn their suffering into comfort and strength for others.

At Christmas, a "two-paced economy", actually means parents facing the private agony of Santa not visiting their children. That's why again this year Mission Australia's Ross Kyrwood tells me, Santa will have gifts for them at Christmas Lunch in the Park.

Those who would otherwise be alone are the heartbeat of Christmas. Like Mission Australia, Vinnies, the Salvos, UnitingCare West, Anglicare, Baptist World Aid, Samaritan's Purse and many others focus on what Mother Teresa called the greatest hunger, the greatest poverty, "being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody".

At Christmas, a child is born. A snug-

ly swaddled gift of love is laid, not in a safe, sterile hospital crib, but in the feed trough of a barn at the back of a country pub. Love amidst life's harsh reality - we are not alone.

Like a dog chasing its tail I never find Christmas joy by chasing it. Like that same tail, when I get on with doing what I can to give it to others Christmas joy follows me everywhere.

I don't hate Christmas. I believe in Christmas, because Christmas changed me.

**The views expressed are not necessarily those of Community Newspapers.**

■ Graham Mabury presents *Nightline* on 6PR weeknights from 8pm.

