

## **CHRISTMAS LETTER**

**For SATB choir**

### **PROGRAMME NOTES**

In the 'good ol' days' of hand written letters, writing was a skill for those invested with wit and imagination. Such was the quality of Doherty's Christmas missive that it deserved a reincarnation set to music. "Quite a hilarious day, really" when the children opted for "a more laid-back lunch at my sister's farm" to the alarm of the parents. Would the turkey be cooked in time? Would the dog attack the emus or jump up on the pregnant sister-in-law? Would the pet ferret bite the dog? "All these worries, and more!" Doherty's Christmas missive is a gem of Australian literature.

The text of *Christmas Letter* was never intended to be sung. It was a friend's account of a family Christmas in Australia written and mailed to me hundreds of miles away in London where the darkest days of a British winter had set in. The brilliant, witty narrative certainly brightened my Christmas. It was far too inspired to be assigned to a draw and much less to a garbage bin so I decided to set it for unaccompanied choir for others to enjoy.

*Christmas Letter* was premiered by the Sydney Chamber Choir conducted by Nicholas Routley at St. James' church, Sydney on 18 September 2004. The choir then toured the letter to Bathurst, Orange and Canberra.