

### A strange Christmas present

adapted from an article by Monte Bovill



- 1 It's not a normal Christmas gift you'd find under a tree, but one Tasmanian family were shocked to discover a snake hiding amongst presents. Felicity Richardson, from Glenlusk on Hobart's outskirts, was woken by her dogs barking nervously around 1:00am on Monday. "I got up to find them all under the Christmas tree. I assumed they had spotted a mouse or rabbit," she said. "I was on my hands and knees moving presents, ready to catch and release whatever it was, only to realise it was a snake."
- 2 Ms Richardson said she moved her dogs – Roxy, Oreo and DJ – to another area of the house and then grabbed her largest pot from the kitchen. "I put it over the snake and then woke my daughter ... she absolutely loves snakes and would have been devastated if she missed out," she said. Ms Richardson and her 13-year-old daughter Ella slid chopping boards under the pot to move the venomous copperhead snake to a larger container while they waited for advice from reptile experts.
- 3 Justin Kneebone from Reptile Rescue Tasmania said it wasn't the first time they've been called out to a snake under a Christmas tree. "It is not unusual for the phones to start ringing from early in the morning and going right through to evening. We receive between 40 to 50 calls a day, if not more. If snakes are out in the Australian summer's heat, they'll try and seek shelter wherever they can," he said. Mr Kneebone said that due to the size of the snake, he advised the family to keep the reptile confined until a ranger could arrive. "I gave them some advice on how to safely confine it, but it isn't something we recommend people do all the time with all types of snakes. A little copperhead is totally different from a large tiger snake," he said. A ranger came to collect and relocate the snake later that morning. "The worst thing is having a snake in a house and then lose sight of it, because that can cause all sorts of problems," Mr Kneebone said.

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