

## **FUNDING FOR NSW GREYHOUND REHOMING PROVIDERS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As a result of the Four Corners program exposing the cruelty and corruption in the greyhound racing industry, the NSW Government established the Special Commission of Inquiry into Greyhound Racing in NSW and following on from that Inquiry, the Greyhound Racing Review Panel.

#### **NSW Special Commission and the Racing Review Panel**

One of the major welfare concerns identified by the Special Commission and the Racing Review Panel was 'wastage'. Wastage is the industry term for the killing of healthy dogs who are no longer profitable. The Special Commission established that the major contributor to wastage was overbreeding and shortfalls in re-homing. The greyhound racing industry business model presently depends on killing those dogs who are no longer profitable. As a result of the Special Commission and the Racing Review Panel, new legislation, the Greyhound Racing Act 2017, was passed by the Parliament and the new regulation was adopted. Additionally, Greyhound Racing NSW (GRNSW) was established as the commercial operator and the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC) was established as an independent body.

### **GWIC GREYHOUND REHOMING POLICY**

The GWIC Greyhound Rehoming Policy is issued under the authority of section 12 (b) of the Greyhound Racing Act 2017 and is enforceable by the GWIC. The new Greyhound Rehoming Policy will take effect on 1 December 2019. The clauses detailing requirements for rehoming, restriction on transferring greyhounds and euthanasia are shown below.

#### **5. Rehoming requirements**

*A greyhound owner must make genuine attempts to rehome any greyhound that they do not wish to retain. If an owner is unable to rehome the greyhound privately, they must first seek the greyhound's admission to the Greyhounds As Pets (GAP) program. If the greyhound is not admitted to the GAP program, the owner must then:*

- *seek to rehome the greyhound through at least one other pet rescue or rehoming organisation; or*
- *seek the greyhound's admission to the GAP program a second time.*

## **6. Exceptions to rehoming requirements**

*The minimum rehoming requirements referred to in clause 5 do not apply in the following circumstances:*

- *where a greyhound has already been rehomed. For example, if a greyhound is rehomed privately, the rehoming requirements have been met and the owner simply needs to provide a completed Retirement Notification form to the Commission; or,*
- *where a greyhound is legally required to be euthanased under a court order, or has been declared a dangerous or menacing dog under section 34 of the Companion Animals Act 1998.*

## **8. Restrictions on transfers**

*Participants must not transfer a greyhound to a person who is under the age of 18 years. A greyhound owner must not transfer a greyhound in circumstances where the owner knows or has reason to believe that the greyhound may be euthanased.*

## **10. Restrictions on euthanasia**

### **Medical euthanasia**

*A greyhound may be euthanased where a veterinarian certifies that the greyhound is suffering from an intractable condition or injury that causes significant pain or discomfort or a marked reduction in quality of life, such that it is inhumane or would otherwise compromise the welfare of the greyhound to delay euthanasia.*

### **Notification of intent to euthanasia a greyhound**

*Where a greyhound is not suffering from an intractable condition or injury that causes significant pain or discomfort or a marked reduction in quality of life, the owner must comply with minimum rehoming standards specified in clause 5 of this Policy before considering euthanasia. If the owner intends to have the greyhound euthanased, they must notify the Commission of this intention at least 10 business days before the greyhound is euthanased, by lodging a completed Intent to Euthanase Greyhound Notification form.*

## **12. Notification requirements**

### **Rehoming**

*Where a greyhound is rehomed to a person or organisation which is not an industry participant (including GAP), the relinquishing owner must, within 10 days of the greyhound leaving their care, notify the Commission by lodging a completed Retirement Notification form.*

### **Euthanasia following unsuccessful attempts to rehome**

*Where an owner of a greyhound has complied with the rehoming requirements in clauses 5 and 6, and the owner intends to have the greyhound euthanased, the owner must, at least 10 business days before the greyhound is to be euthanased, notify the Commission of their intention by lodging a completed Intent to Euthanase Greyhound Notification form. If the greyhound is euthanased following the notification period, the owner must also notify the Commission by lodging a completed Euthanasia of Greyhound by Vet Notification form.*

## REHOMING

Rehoming of greyhounds in NSW occurs through the industry funded Greyhounds As Pets (GAP) program and private rehoming providers which are funded by private donation.

### REHOMING NUMBERS

GRNSW Annual Reports show the following rehoming figures

#### **Greyhounds as Pets**

The number of greyhounds rehomed by the GAP program are:

FY14/15	179
FY15/16	324
FY16/17	498
FY17/18	415

#### **Private Re-homing Providers**

In addition to the GAP program, there are several independent greyhound rehoming organisations in NSW and, along with owners and trainers, these groups play an active and major role in the rehoming of greyhounds. In 2017/18, there were 1,395 greyhounds reported by GRNSW as having been rehomed by independent rehoming organisations, owners or trainers. This is over three times the number of greyhounds rehomed by the industry funded GAP.

#### **GRNSW Annual Report 2018 Rehoming Target**

In October 2018, GRNSW finalised its Strategic Plan 2018-2021, which included as a key measure, rehoming 1,000 greyhounds per year within the next three years through GAP and 1,500 through other rehoming providers. Pursuant to its Operating Licence, GRNSW is required to report against this target as part of its 2018/19 Annual Report.

### REHOMING ASSISTANCE SCHEMES

**(This section is quoted directly from the GRNSW website)**

*GRNSW recently launched the GRNSW Rehoming Contribution Scheme, the Greyhound Rehoming Grant Scheme and the Owners' Incentive Scheme. The descriptions of the schemes shown below are extracted from the GRNSW website.*

### ***Rehoming Contribution Scheme***

*The Rehoming Contribution Scheme aims to assist independent greyhound rehoming organisations. Under the scheme, GRNSW will contribute **\$350** to the veterinary costs of every rehomed greyhound that acquires **Greenhounds status** at any point in its life. (Bolding by CPG).*

*The scheme will apply to greyhounds rehomed since 1 July 2015 and the payment will be made to the rehoming provider's nominated veterinary account. GRNSW recognises the tireless work independent rehoming organisations undertake to secure a successful retirement for large numbers of racing greyhounds and bear significant costs in doing so.*

*The intent of the GRNSW Rehoming Contribution Scheme is to assist these re-homing organisations and help them continue to undertake the tremendous work they currently do.*

*To claim a contribution, an application for each eligible greyhound must be submitted by completing the Application for GRNSW Greyhound Rehoming Contribution Scheme.*

### ***Rehoming Grant Scheme***

*The Greyhound Rehoming Grant Scheme aims to support the tremendous work independent rehoming organisations do to find new homes for retired greyhounds.*

*Under the scheme, eligible organisations have the opportunity to apply for up to **\$10 000** towards the cost of an item or service that directly benefits their rehoming activities. Grants will be assessed and awarded tri-annually at the end of February, June and October. (Bolding by CPG)*

*Examples of items that are potentially eligible for a grant contribution under the scheme include dog trailers, a veterinary account as well as kennel renovations and/or extensions.*

*The introduction of the Greyhound Rehoming Grant Scheme is in addition to the GRNSW Rehoming Contribution Scheme, which was introduced in 2015.*

### ***Owners Incentive Scheme***

*Owners of greyhounds registered with the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC) in NSW are being encouraged to take advantage of the new arrangements for rehoming retired greyhounds through the Owners' Incentive Scheme.*

*Funding and administration of the scheme is provided through the Greyhounds as Pets (GAP) program. The aim of the scheme is to support **participants** who would like to **keep their greyhounds as pets or rehome them to family or friends** once their racing careers are*

*over. The scheme provides funding for the greyhound to have a veterinary check, be desexed and have any minor dental work carried out. (Bolding by CPG).*

*Under the new arrangements for the scheme, **owners registered with GWIC** who retire a greyhound and intend to keep their greyhound as a pet or rehome the greyhound to family or friends, can apply to have their greyhound entered into the scheme. (Bolding by CPG).*

*Key changes from the earlier version of the scheme are as follows:*

- *participants will no longer be required to pay \$50 to enter their greyhound into the scheme,*
- *the greyhound will no longer be required to have a behavioural assessment at a GAP facility or by a GAP staff member,*
- *the veterinary examination, desexing procedure and a dental care procedure (if required) can now be undertaken at your choice of veterinary surgery or hospital anywhere in NSW.*

*The GAP contributions in support of the scheme are capped as follows:*

- *Vet check and desexing (including all fees and expenses) - **\$450***
- *Dental care procedures (including all fees and expenses) - **\$200***

*If there are surgical complications (e.g., a cryptorchid male) or the dental work required is more serious and requires extractions payment beyond the cap may be possible with the prior approval of the GRNSW Chief Veterinarian.*

*There are two options for payment to be made under the scheme. The veterinarian performing the procedures can invoice **GAP** directly or the owner of the greyhound can pay the veterinarian and claim a reimbursement from **GRNSW**. The scheme application form provides for both options. (Bolding by CPG).*

## **PROBLEMS WITH GRNSW ASSISTANCE SCHEMES**

The problems with the NSWGR Assistance Schemes are; eligibility, funding amount and morality.

### **Eligibility**

The Rehoming Contribution Scheme only applies to those greyhounds that attain Greenhound status. Many greyhounds will not attain this status so this scheme will not assist those dogs. The Owners' Incentive Scheme only applies to industry participants who would like to keep their greyhounds as pets or rehome them to family or friends. It is not equitable that the industry GAP is fully funded by the commercial operator while the private rehoming providers, who rehome three times as many dogs, depend upon private donation.

### **Funding Amount**

The amounts available are limited to veterinary costs and the cost of an item or service that directly benefits their rehoming activities. The amounts available are not adequate to meet all veterinary costs. The schemes completely ignore all other costs associated with the day-to-day running of a greyhound rescue.

### **Morality**

Many private rescue providers regard the greyhound racing industry as corrupt, cruel and based on a business model that involves the killing of dogs who are no longer profitable. For these reasons, the vast majority of independent rescue groups find accepting money from the industry to be against their moral code.

## **A JUST ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

A just and acceptable assistance scheme must eliminate the problems identified with the current scheme. A just scheme must be based on the following criteria.

### **Eligibility**

All private rehoming providers and all greyhounds, regardless of Greenhound status, must be covered by the scheme.

### **Funding Amount**

All veterinary costs, regardless of the amount, must be covered. In addition, the day-to-day cost of operating the rescue facility must be included. The day-to-day operations must also include the cost of a salary for full-time workers. Advice from RSPCA NSW is that it costs \$19 per day per dog for a dog in their shelters. This covers all costs including salaries for workers but not the cost of constructing the facility.

### **Morality**

The money provided to the private rehoming groups cannot come directly from the greyhound racing industry as this is considered by most outside of the industry, to be money that is tainted by cruelty and corruption. The private rehoming groups consulted by the Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds (CPG) have advised that they will accept funds from the NSW State Government. Legislation already exists in the Betting Tax Act 2001 for the NSW Government to tax the gambling industry to fund greyhound welfare. The CPG recommends that the monies raised by NSW Government via this tax be used to fund the private rehoming groups. Depending on the amount of funds required, the Betting Tax Act may require amendment to raise additional funds. This arrangement allows the private rehoming providers to be at arms-length from the industry's commercial operator.

## **CONCLUSION**

Current GWIC policy requires racing industry owners to attempt to rehome their greyhounds before euthanasia may be considered.

The historical ratio of private rehoming is approximately 3 to 1 when compared to the industry funded GAP. The GRNSW rehoming target acknowledges that private rehoming providers will continue to rehome more dogs than GAP.

The GAP program is fully funded by the industry commercial operator whereas the private rehoming providers are funded by public donation. This is not equitable.

The GRNSW assistance schemes have very limited eligibility, provide inadequate amounts for veterinary treatment and nothing for day-to-day operations. In addition, many private rehoming providers will not accept industry money.

A just scheme with the NSW Government providing funds for all private rehoming providers and all greyhounds, without limits on veterinary costs and including the cost of day-to-day operations is necessary. The NSW Government should raise these funds from the gambling industry through the Betting Tax Act 2001.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. All private rehoming providers be funded by the NSW Government using funds raised by the Betting Tax Act 2001.
2. This funding to be at the rate of \$19 per day per dog, which will cover all veterinary costs and the costs of day-to-day operations of the rescue organisation, including staff salaries.

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