

A GAPing hole in the industry

Greyhound rehoming in Australia -
industry GAPs vs community-run rehoming



The truth is that every racing dog unprepared for rehoming has been betrayed by its owner because when it fails a racing industry screening test enough times, it will be euthanised.

Executive summary

Despite it being six years since the live baiting expose in 2015, the Australian dog racing industry's rehoming effort is still underpar. The current rate of annual greyhound breeding nationally is six times the GAPs' capacity to rehome. In the biggest racing states of NSW and Victoria, community-run rescues still rehome more dogs than the cashed-up racing industry.

In 2019/20, the only two state-funded GAPs (Qld and Tas) rehomed more dogs than the community, while GAP WA has been rehoming slightly more than the community for several years. Both SA and the NT remain the 'black holes' of GAP re-homing with little or no data published.

Disturbing trends in some states show racing dog owners are directly disposing of greyhounds to third parties – this is not recommended by the RSPCA – while some owners are disposing of greyhounds to labs for experiments. GAPs still kill dogs given to them for rehoming - some as many as one in ten ex-racers - yet community-run

rescues rehome without euthanising greyhounds unless they are terminally ill. In 2019/20, GAP Queensland had the highest kill rate, while NSW and Victoria follow close behind. Finally, CPG recommends several solutions that both state governments and the racing industry could adopt if they want to improve greyhound rehoming.

About GAPs

While referred to as GAP (Greyhound Adoption Program) in most states, the NSW industry calls its rehoming scheme Greyhounds as Pets (also called GAP for short), as does Western Australia.

In NSW, there is one community-run rehoming group that called itself GAP (Greyhound Adoption Program), long before the industry was making any effort to find retired dogs a post-racing home.

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Introduction

It is now six years since the 2015 live baiting exposé, so the greyhound racing industry has had plenty of time to get its house in order. In the intervening years, the industry has been promoting each of its state-based GAPs with glossy videos and celebrity ambassadors.

The industry has been telling the public these schemes ensure greyhounds are adopted as pets after their racing career ends. Given this and the fact that the biggest eastern seaboard state GAPs have budgets of seven figures, it would be reasonable to expect that these schemes have now well overtaken the rehoming effort made by volunteer-run community rescue groups.

That said, there is no national data on greyhound rehoming available from either state governments or the racing industry. Consequently, CPG has reviewed and collated the last five years of data from racing industry annual reports, as well as other sources.

Data analysis

While data for 2015-17 is patchy, a clear picture emerges by 2021. See **Table 1** on the following page.



[Live baiting is rife in Australian greyhound racing industry, footage shows. Daily Mail, 23 October 2015](#)



<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/accused-live-baiter-to-...> **Accused live baiter to face NSW court - SBS**

10 Oct 2016 — A NSW greyhound trainer accused of killing animals as regime has been charged with six animal cruelty offences and is ...

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-36734760>

Australia: NSW bans greyhound racing after scandal - BBC

7 July 2016 — A government investigation found overwhelming evidence of animal cruelty, including mass greyhound killings and "live baiting".

How the live-baiting scandal led to the downfall of greyhound racing in NSW

Making a Killing - Four Corners

Posted Thu 7 Jul 2016 at 4:03pm, updated Thu 7 Jul 2016 at 4:59pm



Greyhound trainer charged over alleged live baiting on eve of backflip on NSW ban

News

NSW greyhound racing industry to be shut down from 2017

UPDATE: GREYHOUND racing will stay in Victoria — but the industry says it faces "immense pressure" — after NSW's shock decision to end the sport.

ALEX WHITE, MILES GODFREY
6 min read July 7, 2016 - 9:10PM **Daily Telegraph**

0 comments

Live baiting fallout continues | Herald Sun

19 Feb 2015 — GREYHOUND racing's major sponsors are deserting the sport and the governing board of the NSW arm of the industry has been disbanded, ...

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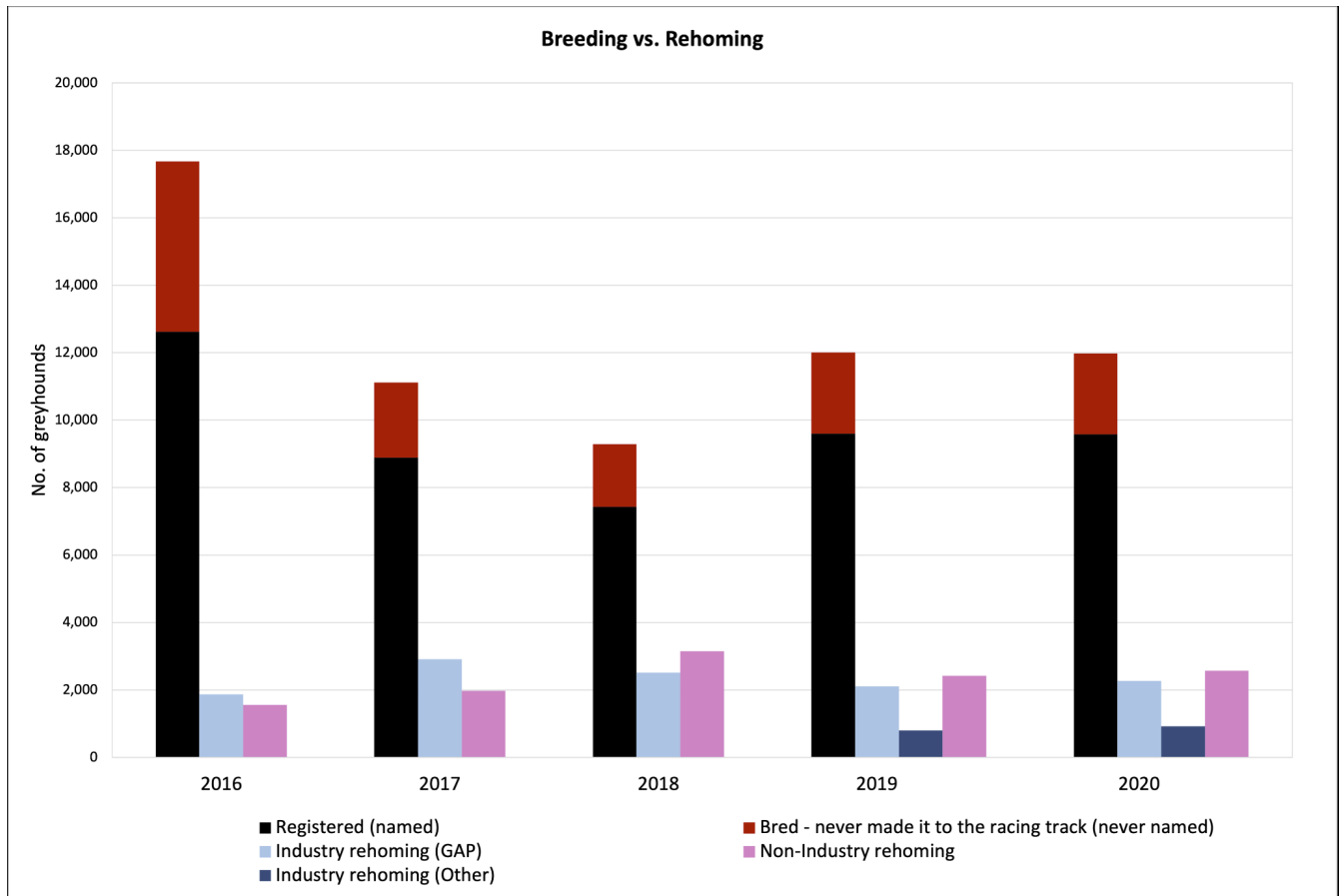


Table 1: Breeding vs Rehoming

For this table, greyhound rehoming data was collated by CPG, whilst greyhound registration data was sourced from *The Australian and New Zealand Greyhound Stud Book*, Volume 68 (page 9). Greyhounds are generally named for racing at between 12 and 18 months of age, creating a time lag between whelping and naming. The category of *Dogs bred but never named/registered* is not captured in the stud book, hence this is estimated as 40 per cent of the registered (named) figure for 2016 and 25 per cent for 2017-2020. The 40 per cent estimate is derived from the McHugh inquiry, after which breeding numbers dropped. For the years after 2016, the 25 per cent estimate is based on advice received from regulators, as well as being the figure cited by the CEO of Greyhound Racing Victoria during an interview with ABC-TV earlier this year.

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The numbers show that in 2021, the 'heavy lifting' is still done by community-run volunteer rescue groups that must rely on donations and fundraising. These community efforts grew in response to revelations that have emerged about the [killing fields](#) and [mass graves](#) used to get rid of racing greyhounds.

Meanwhile, the big racing states provide their GAPs with large budgets - GAP NSW received \$3.394M in 2019/20¹ and GAP Victoria received \$4.478M in 2019/20².

These funds come from their respective state racing bodies. The exceptions being GAP Queensland which is [entirely funded](#) by the State Government and GAP Tasmania where the bulk of the Tasracing budget comes from the State Government³.

GAP NSW received \$3.394M in 2019/20 and GAP Victoria received \$4.478M in 2019/20, while community-run rescues do it tough



Additionally, GAPs are not-for-profit entities and recruit volunteers, so have the benefit of both tax concessions and free labour. Some GAPs even defray their costs by using prison inmates to socialise and train dogs.⁴

When all of these factors are borne in mind, it is astonishing that GAPs have rehomed so few dogs over the last five years.

Even more damning is the dire reality revealed in Table 1 which shows an estimate of the total number of dogs needing to be placed after they cease racing versus dogs that actually find a home. This applies particularly to the large racing states on the eastern seaboard of Australia – see **Table 2** on the next page.

¹ [GRNSW annual report 2020](#), p6.

² [GRV annual report 2019-20](#), p49.

³ tasracingcorporate.com.au/about/funding

⁴ According to [GRNSW's 2020 annual report](#) (p6), the GAP Prison Program is jointly funded by Corrective Services NSW and GRNSW. In WA, the Bunbury Prison Program uses prisoners to care for GAP foster greyhounds for six weeks – [RWWA annual report 2019](#)

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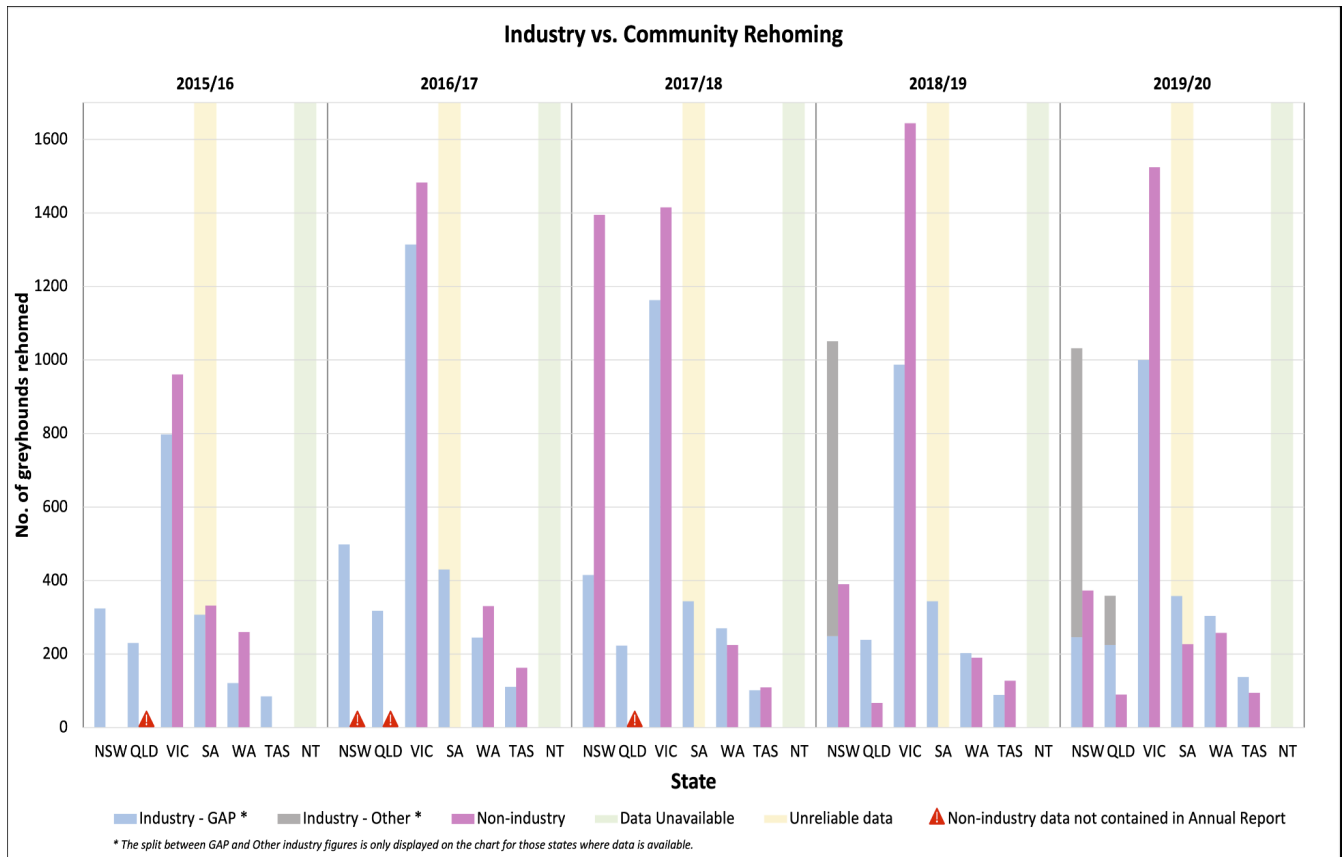


Table 2: Industry vs Community Rehoming

Victorian and WA data is not audited by an independent regulator as occurs in Queensland, Tasmania and NSW. SA data is listed as unreliable as RSPCA SA has slammed Greyhound Racing SA for its lack of data transparency. The NT publishes no data on greyhound rehoming. See below for supporting data.

CPG analysis - overview by state

VICTORIA

- The effort by community groups has always been stellar, rehoming around 1,500 dogs per year.
- GAP Victoria’s efforts have been in moderate decline since they hit a high of just over 1,250 in 2016/177. Their latest effort was 1,000 in 2019/20.
- However, GAP Victoria’s data is not scrutinised by an independent regulator as is the case in NSW. Until further transparency is achieved by publication of third party audited data, Greyhound Racing Victoria’s (GRV) claims remain unverified.
- Moreover, as Table 3 reveals, in 2015 and 2016 community rehomingers, the Greyhound Safety Net and the Animal Justice Party claimed publicly that GAP Victoria’s rehoming data was wholly unreliable.



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NSW

- In both 2019/20 and 2018/19, better refined data has revealed racing industry participants retained over 500 dogs, while GAP itself only rehomed just under 250 dogs in each of those years. This is a miniscule effort by a GAP in one of the biggest racing states in Australia.
- Moreover, GRNSW's [strategic plan 2018-21](#) includes the following key measure - "Rehome 1,000 greyhounds per year within the next three years through GAP and 1,500 through other rehoming providers". **Table 2** shows this has been a big failure.
- Incredibly, the NSW Government chose not to include any hard deadlines or penalties for late delivery in [GRNSW's operating licence](#) and gives [millions of taxpayer dollars](#) to the dog racing industry every year.
- It is difficult to believe that this approach would be in keeping with the NSW Auditor-General's guidelines on public accountability or best practice contract management.

QUEENSLAND

It is only in the last two financial years that Queensland has collected community rehoming figures.

In 2019/20, GAP Queensland rehomed 209 greyhounds - twice as many greyhounds as the community which

rehomed 90 dogs - with a budget of almost \$1M.⁵

TASMANIA

In FY2019/20, GAP Tasmania was slightly ahead of the community's efforts for the first time, having rehomed 138 to the community's 95 greyhounds. In this period, it's budget was \$117,389.⁶

WA

- Since FY2017/18, GAP WA has been rehoming about 10 percent more dogs than the community and this trend is slowly increasing.
- Meanwhile in 2019-20, GAP WA claims⁷ to have rehomed 304 dogs, but its budget is not published.

SA and NT

- These states are 'black holes' when it comes to data transparency.
- SA industry data is minimal and has been [publicly slammed by the RSPCA](#) as unreliable.
- There is no GAP NT and no rehoming data is published by the authorities.

⁵ ABC [article](#), 2019.

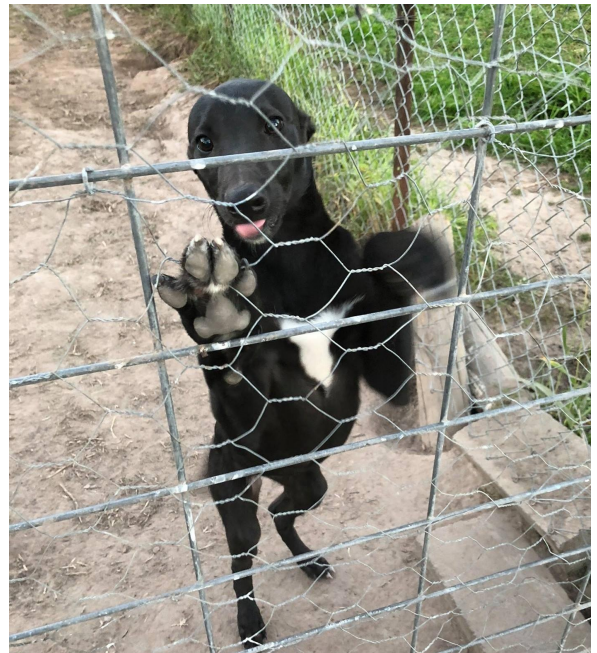
⁶ Tasracing [Annual report 2020](#), p26.

⁷ See later discussion in this paper regarding the lack of clarity in RWWA's annual report.

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“Unlike GRV they do not discriminate, and do not expect dogs to fit a mould, rather taking the approach to rehoming of all greyhounds while respecting the dog’s individuality.”

Australian Racing Greyhound magazine on community rehoming groups



Socialisation – the ongoing ‘gap’

So given this less than impressive performance across all jurisdictions, what’s going on with GAPs? Are they just a PR exercise as some like to say? This requires a closer look.

All GAPs euthanise greyhounds deemed to be unsuitable for rehoming, whereas community rehoming groups are no-kill. In fact, [one such group](#) says it has never been unable to rehome a greyhound. So why is there such a disparity in approach? As usual, it’s about money, not love, when it comes to the greyhound racing industry.

The industry GAPs aim to [screen out](#) greyhounds that have been poorly socialised by industry participants, so that re-homing costs are kept down.

Otherwise, time and money would be needed to rehabilitate greyhounds with behaviour problems such as anxiety, fear aggression and timidity.

Even the racing industry itself has been critical of the GAP [screening test](#) and recognises the incredible contribution made by community-run rescue groups. The industry magazine Australian Racing Greyhound wrote of community-run greyhound rescues - *“Unlike GRV they do not discriminate, and do not expect dogs to fit a mould, rather taking the approach to rehoming of all greyhounds while respecting the dog’s individuality.”*

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Also, the Victorian Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association (GBOTA) said in a [presentation](#) this year: "All greyhounds should have the same opportunity in retirement as dogs passing GAP assessment."

Ironically, all state racing bodies have rules (or must observe codes imposed by government) that require industry participants to socialise their dogs. Despite this, publicly available records show these owners are not penalised for failing to comply.

Euthanasia – another 'gap' in the system

Five years later, and without an independent regulator, GRV is still not providing transparent evidence. CPG had to submit an [FOI request](#) to source the latest euthanasia figures. In 2019/20, GAP Victoria killed 11.8 percent of dogs accepted.

Data available from NSW's greyhound welfare regulator shows 56 healthy dogs were killed in FY2019/20 ([11.5 percent](#) of all euthanasia that year in the state) after being deemed unsuitable for rehoming. In NSW, an owner is able to euthanise a racing greyhound after two attempts to rehome via GAP or one via GAP and one via a community rehomer.

One year earlier, [data obtained via FOI](#)⁸ for FY2018 showed a third of retired greyhounds (257 out of 671) surrendered

⁸ NSW's independent regulator only began operating in 2017/18.

As RSPCA Australia [says](#) - "Many greyhound puppies and adult greyhounds are never adequately socialised, either with other dogs or with humans."

This sad truth makes a farce of one of the 'big lies' told by the industry – that they '[love their dogs](#)'. The truth is that every dog unprepared for rehoming has been betrayed by its industry owner because when it fails a GAP screening test enough times, it will be euthanised.

were euthanised for failing the screening test. Twelve were even euthanised after passing the test.

"There's no doubt that the number one thing the industry can do to address the cruelty and the high euthanasia rates is to stop the over-breeding. And they have to provide the evidence that their initiatives around animal welfare are working."

Liz Walker, Chief Executive, RSPCA Victoria, calls on industry to be more transparent in order to gain the public's trust.⁹

⁹ Media [article](#), 2016.

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Dogs were failed for showing aggression or a predatory response to a small dog, or fear of other greyhounds, yet these behaviours are routinely rehabilitated by the community rescues.

GAP Queensland rehomed 209 greyhounds in FY2019/20, after killing 30 dogs in that period deemed unsuitable for adoption (14.35 per cent).¹⁰

GAP Tasmania has been riven with management problems that [hit the media](#) and earned an [RSPCA critique](#).

Meanwhile, Tasracing reports that 90 greyhounds in Tasmania were euthanised in 2019/20¹¹, but does not reveal how many of those were killed by GAP - “[the category] Euthanised refers to registered greyhounds that have been put down either to an injury suffered from racing or who are unsuitable to rehome or race.”

In effect, Tasracing hides the number of dogs killed by its GAP and this lack of transparency is part of the systemic issue mentioned above.

While SA and NT are well-known greyhound welfare data ‘black holes’, GAP WA is more transparent and killed 11 of the 315 surrendered for rehoming¹² (a 3.4 per cent euthanasia rate) in 2019/20. In fact, GAP WA has the lowest kill rates of any GAP in Australia for several years.

Overall, because GAPs screen out unsocialised racers by using legally sanctioned euthanasia, the vicious cycle grinds on towards the final needle.

The vital fact to remember is that by contrast, non-industry rehoming groups are run by actual animal lovers who will accept dogs requiring extensive rehabilitation.

One of these groups – which has been rescuing ex-racers for many years but wanted to remain anonymous – says it has [never been unable to rehome a greyhound](#), even if it takes a year or two of rehabilitation.

In racing kennel rehomed



After being rehomed



Traumatised greyhound (shown in owner’s kennel at left) becomes increasingly relaxed (at right) after rescue by community rehoming group.

Image sourced from community-run rescue.

¹⁰ QRIC’s [Greyhound breeding, race injury and retirement report for 2019/20](#), p8.

¹¹ Tasracing [annual report](#) 2020, p8.

¹² RWWA [annual report](#) 2020, p38.

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So what are the other problems with the GAPs?

GAP adoption days – blind giving

These are mass 'giveaway' [days](#) held in each state.

Such events are much vaunted by GAPs as a great opportunity for "potential adopters to find out more about the breed, learn about greyhound care, foster care opportunities and to find the perfect pooch to join their family". There are also [videos](#) available.

The big problem is that unlike the community-run rescue groups, the GAPs don't check the truth of what would-be adopters write on application forms by conducting home visits.¹³

This can be risky re-homing if dogs end up in places that are not suitable, eg where there is insufficient fencing, other incompatible animals, etc.



¹³ CPG confirmed this by contacting the GAPs individually.

No GAP

When there are no rules at all and no GAP, as in the NT, it is back to the bad old days of killing any dog not wanted.

This was recently documented by a report on the Darwin Greyhound Association. The [report](#) was produced by the law firm Hutton McCarthy for the NT government and shows:

- injury and euthanasia rates in the Territory are amongst the highest in the country (p74),
- drug swabs return positive results almost four times higher than the next jurisdiction (p6).

As there is no breeding in the NT, all dogs that race there are transferred from interstate.

If an industry participant has a 'slow' dog he or she wants to dump, it can always be sent to the NT. The Territory Government requires little in the way of animal welfare provisions and publishes no statistics on what happens to racing greyhounds.

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The interstate shuffle – ‘gaps’ in data

And there’s always the ‘interstate ‘shuffle’ to get rid of dogs instead of trying to get them rehomed with GAP or with the community.

This happened when more stringent rules surrounding greyhound euthanasia were introduced in Victoria in 2016. Fran Chambers, coordinator of Let Greyhounds Run Free (a Tasmanian community rescue), said as a result, a wave of Victorian [dogs were sent to Tasmania to become pets or be put down](#).

It’s quite likely that the ‘interstate shuffle’ is being used right now to avoid any kind of rehoming, GAP or otherwise. For example, NSW’s independent regulator maintains that the 2,000 or so dogs CPG deemed as missing in its [NSW case study](#) have been transferred interstate. The regulator is not empowered to track interstate transfer, so the whereabouts and status of these dogs is yet to be confirmed and made public.

Doubters would do well to remember what former financial regulator Henry Bosch¹⁴ observed about the need for a national securities commission – that without one, crooks would simply move across a state border and set up shop once more. This year there’s been a similar pattern emerging with [new Victorian laws on puppy farming](#) resulting in these operations moving into NSW. Ultimately, this is why a public national greyhound register is needed in Australia.

¹⁴ Henry Bosch, *The workings of a watchdog*, William Heinemann, 1990.

Third party adoption – being blindsided

In addition to greyhounds being kept by industry participants, adopted via GAP or non-industry rescue groups, there are also dogs given directly by the industry to third parties for adoption.

RSPCA Australia is on the public record about third party rehoming with this [warning](#) - “Third party adoptions (i.e. those not through organisations like GAP) should be verified and followed up to ensure they are genuine.”

So, third party rehoming is risky. There’s no oversight by any authority to ensure that dogs reach safe homes with appropriate bedding and fencing. Even worse, greyhounds can end up in [dog-fighting rings as bait](#), just like other dog breeds.

Rehoming to third parties also means an industry participant can dump an ex-racer on an unsuspecting member of the public who is unprepared for rehabilitating a dog with problems.

This can result in an attempt to return the greyhound, but some industry participants refuse to take the dog back. Once again, the greyhound ends up on the outer and can find itself at a pound and later euthanised.

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Even in states like NSW with an independent greyhound industry regulator, third party adoptions are not tracked (because the regulator is not empowered to do so) and therein lies risk and the consequent potential for greyhounds to 'disappear'.

In the last two financial years, re-homing to third parties by industry participants has been documented separately to GAP rehoming, instead of being combined under the broader umbrella of 'industry rehoming'.

This data is being provided by independent regulators in NSW and Queensland - see **Table 3**. This new category of data is extremely valuable. It provides further transparency about how much re-homing is actually being achieved by the GAPs versus that being done by industry participants themselves.



Injured greyhound dumped at council pound, rescued by community rehoming group. Surgery funded by donation.

Image sourced from community-run rescue.

A 'gap' in transparency

When compared to its equivalents, GAP Victoria appears to have a higher rate of rehoming. At first glance it looks good with 1,000 greyhounds rehomed in 2020.

GRV's CEO advised CPG that its re-homing figures are audited every three years by the RSPCA, but nothing is made publicly available, so who really knows? Also, GRV does not reveal what percentage of its re-homing is actually done by industry participants to third parties. If the percentage is similar to GAP NSW – about 50 per cent – then GAP Victoria is actually rehoming only about 250 dogs per year in 2019-20.

This would explain why GAP Victoria and GAP NSW's outcomes appear to be so different at first glance. It would also explain why so few of the usual adoption photos and descriptions of dogs appear on GAP Victoria's website over the course of each year.

WA and Queensland's racing industry rehoming programs are similarly littered with conflicting numbers.

"Third party adoptions (i.e. those not through organisations like GAP) should be verified and followed up to ensure they are genuine."

RSPCA Australia

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In 2020, Racing and Wagering WA (RWWA) reported that 350 greyhounds were adopted through the GAP WA program, 147 more dogs than the year prior (p38).

However, that 350 figure includes all greyhounds in the GAP WA program at the time of reporting, not how many dogs were actually successfully placed in a home.

Finally, the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) reported that in 2020, 240 greyhounds were rehomed, however 15 of those were returned to GAP by their new owners (p18). The fate of those 15 returned dogs is not made clear by QRIC's data.



A 'gap' in credibility

It's revealing that none of the state greyhound racing bodies actually include full information in their annual reports about the total amount of funding they provide to community-run rescues each year. Instead, a good deal of PR noise is made about the schemes on offer.

That said, almost all of the racing bodies mention their assistance to community re-homing groups in their annual reports. This suggests to the uninformed reader that there are strong supportive arrangements in place. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Until recently, racing bodies have only given small sums to community-run rescues. In 2020, GRNSW finally offered a realistic cap of \$850 to rescues for any individual undesexed greyhound under the age of seven years to cover desexing, teeth cleaning, vaccination and heartworm treatment.

From this year, GRV offers a similar amount to industry participants but does not allow rescue groups to apply for funding. Instead, GRV says to rescue groups - *'GRV encourages all re-homing groups and shelters to request greyhounds be desexed under this scheme prior to acceptance into your program'*.

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This is ridiculous. It often creates an impossible situation for Victorian community-run rescues when faced with industry participants wanting to surrender greyhounds unprepared for rehoming. It's well-known in rescue circles that some participants say the dogs will be put down if they aren't accepted.

Finally, one of the most recent public promises announced about rehoming was made by the NSW Government. It announced in June this year that under its new funding model, GRNSW will be freed up from directly funding its regulator.

The NSW Government said this meant GRNSW could contribute a minimum of [\\$25M over the next five years](#) to a newly established Greyhound Industry Future Fund that will invest in capital items like grandstands and patron facilities, as well as rehoming facilities. No details have been announced about what percentage of these funds would go to rehoming. A similar lack of transparency was demonstrated by GRNSW when it announced a [new rehoming facility](#) in August 2020 and promised this 'farm stay' for greyhounds would be "fully operational by next year". In September 2021, GRNSW [re-announced](#) the same 'new' rehoming facility, but this time there was no information about when it would open. Such 'smoke and mirrors' are an ongoing feature of the NSW Government and its dog racing industry.

Avoiding GAP entirely – a really big 'gap'

There is a dark secret revealed by Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) statistics. Under the category '[surrendered to other agency](#)', QRIC's data shows greyhounds are still being given for experiments to labs and vet product manufacturers, as well as to universities for blood banks and dissection. QRIC does not follow up with these 'agencies' and simply [notes](#) - "Euthanasia and adoption data from these agencies are not currently available."

In FY2019/20, Queensland industry participants gave 195 greyhounds to these agencies. Most dogs that survive being used this way are usually killed, yet this is an industry that tells us they 'love their dogs'. Meanwhile, during the same financial year, Queensland's greyhound racing industry saw [record breaking](#) turnover (\$1.0 billion (+18.7%)), so there's no reason for it to be abandoning dogs in these appalling ways.

This cruel practice is likely to be going on in other states, but is not captured in official figures. It is a surreptitious business that none of the parties involved want exposed to the light of day. However, Humane Research International (HRI) has [documented](#) a range of recent experiments using greyhounds that result in death for those dogs.

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The GAP filled by industry participants?

The more detailed statistics provided by independent regulators in NSW and Queensland include the number of industry participants who keep retired greyhounds. There is no provision in greyhound welfare codes - where they exist for each state - to ensure greyhounds will live uncaged when retired in this way, ie, like a pet.

Only the NSW code refers to such dogs and in part 7.11 says that dogs retired to industry participants must be allowed a minimum of one hour per day to escape their cages.

Most greyhounds are retired from racing around four years of age and living in a cage for the rest of their lives is a dismal prospect.

In the case of NSW, dogs retired to industry participants can be included in inspections by the regulator. It is a huge oversight on the part of state-based racing bodies and regulators elsewhere to stipulate no minimum requirements about exercise for dogs retired to industry participants. In doing so, they condemn these greyhounds to the possibility of permanent captivity with no grounds for redress by animal welfare authorities.



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Conclusion

Five years on from the live baiting scandal, the new national data provided in this paper shows that the racing industry GAPs have failed to deliver on re-homing. They will continue to fail unless urgent action is taken by both the racing industry and state governments.

The current rate of annual breeding Australia-wide is six times the GAPs' capacity to rehome, ie, the GAPs rehomed about 2,000 dogs nationally in 2020, but about 12,000 were bred that year. Further, about 2,000 greyhound pups bred each year for the last two years have never been named, i.e., have never raced and fall in the category of what the industry has always termed 'wastage'.

Community-run greyhound rescues in NSW, Victoria, the NT and SA still bear the burden of rehoming ex-racers and do so with scant funding compared to the industry-run GAPs. Meanwhile, in the last year the two state-funded GAPs (Queensland and Tasmania) are now re-homing more dogs than the community. Only GAP WA has been re-homing slightly more greyhounds than the community for a few years.

Given the generous size of GAP budgets – especially in the biggest racing states of NSW and Victoria, it's extraordinary that so few dogs are actually homed. Worse still, with the much vaunted [boom in wagering](#) over the last year due to COVID era punting, even more money should be available for greyhound rehoming.

The official RSPCA Australia [policy](#) on greyhound racing is a useful touchstone for anyone who thinks going to the dogs for an evening's entertainment is unproblematic.

"...while commercial greyhound racing continues, there will not be enough suitable homes available to absorb the large number of dogs produced each year. This is the case even when taking into account the small proportion of greyhounds that may be kept by the owner or rehomed through adoption programs.

The turnover rate for unwanted greyhounds is very high with an average number of career starts at only 31 starts for each greyhound and an estimated average career turnover time of approximately 1.2 years.

Therefore, greyhound racing will continue to result in high euthanasia rates. In order to match birth rates to rehoming capacity, the required reduction in the number of greyhounds bred each year would be so significant that industry would not be sustainable."

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It is undeniable that with such overall underperformance by the industry GAPs, state governments must stop giving taxpayers' money to the racing industry, must retain betting revenue to fund re-homing and must oversee that effort. That said, state governments in Australia are failing to listen to their voters - [all surveys of the general population](#) regarding public attitudes to greyhound racing show most Australians do not want greyhound racing to continue.

Meanwhile, CPG's new national data also shows that some GAPs are doing better than others – see **Table 2**. GAP NSW has failed spectacularly, having directly homed only 246 dogs in 2019/20, despite a \$3.394M budget, while NSW's community-run rescues rehomed 373 dogs on the smell of an oily rag.

Greyhound Racing NSW publishes no data on how much financial assistance it provides to community rehoming in NSW each year. Meanwhile, GAP NSW's ongoing underperformance is facilitated by the NSW State Government which attached no rehoming targets to Greyhound Racing NSW's operating licence.

This undermines the discipline that the independent NSW regulator can bring to bear on GRNSW on behalf of the strong public interest in animal welfare.

Unlike GAP NSW, GAP Victoria is not subject to the scrutiny of an independent regulator and its data transparency is poor. It claims to have rehomed 1,000 dogs in 2019/20, yet hasn't published a breakdown for that figure, i.e., third party rehoming by industry participants, dogs kept by participants.

Moreover, while the Victorian greyhound racing industry says the community rehomed 1,524 greyhounds, it once again doesn't publish a breakdown for this figure either (but in an FOI return claims re-homing by industry participants is included). GAP Victoria must provide more transparent data if it is to be trusted by the public.

A disturbing trend is evident in NSW and Queensland (due to more transparent reporting), whereby industry participants are directly disposing of unwanted greyhounds to third parties. This is not recommended by the RSPCA. Third party re-homing is likely to be on the increase in other states as well, but without better data being available in those jurisdictions, this remains unknown at this stage.

Worse still, in FY2019/20, official figures show Queensland racing industry participants gave 195 greyhounds to labs for experiments and to universities for dissection. This cruel practice is likely to be

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going on in other states, but is not captured in official figures.

GAP Queensland and GAP Tasmania are funded by their respective state governments. In 2019/20, GAP Queensland with a budget of \$0.9M directly rehomed 209 greyhounds, while the Queensland community rehomed 90 dogs.

In 2019/20, GAP Tasmania directly rehomed 138 dogs, while the Tasmanian community rehomed 95 greyhounds. So the industry rehoming effort by these two state-funded GAPs is finally pulling ahead of community re-homing as it should be doing more than five years after the live baiting scandal.

In FY2019/20, Queensland racing industry participants gave 195 greyhounds to labs for experiments and to universities for dissection.

Both SA and the NT are the 'black holes' of GAP rehoming – Greyhound Racing SA publishes little data, while the NT collects none. Worse still, the recent [report](#) on the Darwin Greyhound Association has documented that the NT has the highest rates of euthanasia and drugging in the nation.

All GAPs kill dogs and this proves the failure of the Australian greyhound industry to socialise its racers as per industry racing requirements. If community-run rescues can rehome without killing greyhounds, so should GAPs.

Yet in 2019/20, GAP Queensland had the highest kill rate for greyhounds surrendered to it (14.35 percent), while NSW and Victoria follow close behind with both euthanising just over one in 10 greyhounds surrendered to each of them.

The NT is likely to be the worst of all - given recent report findings on the Darwin Greyhound Association - but no data is published. Across Australia's remaining states, GAP WA kills the least, while GAP Tasmania hides the number it kills by including those deaths amongst all greyhound deaths both on track and off during a given year.

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"If more of these dogs are to have a happy ending, all breeders and trainers need to be raising suitable companion animals from birth, giving them a greater chance to live a full life beyond their racing career."

CEO, RSPCA Victoria

These GAP kill rates are unacceptable given current [community attitudes](#) in Australia to animal welfare. While greyhound racing supporters will argue these figures are much better than they were in the past, this simply highlights once again the abysmal findings of most inquiries held into the dog racing industry over the last ten to 20 years.

In [2016](#), the RSPCA Victoria's CEO summed it up well, "If more of these dogs are to have a happy ending, all breeders and trainers need to be raising suitable companion animals from birth, giving them a greater chance to live a full life beyond their racing career."



Unless otherwise indicated, all images in this report are sourced from the *Farm Transparency Project*.

A GAPing hole in the industry

Going forward – CPG recommendations

Some of these options would solve the greyhound rehoming problem if used concurrently, while others such as the fourth option could be used in isolation.

1. Relevant authorities – both in the industry and independent regulators – must enforce socialisation requirements by way of checks during kennel inspections. Where industry participants have failed to socialise their greyhounds, they should be penalised.
2. State governments must stop giving taxpayers' money to the greyhound racing industry and instead put it towards greyhound rehoming.
3. No healthy greyhound should be euthanised, including those accepted at any point of the GAP process.
4. Each GAP must fund a rehoming place for every greyhound whelped in or transferred into the state.
5. Governments must fund community-run, non-industry rescues, as well as private [sanctuaries](#) for dogs unable to be rehomed, using betting tax revenue.
6. All greyhounds retired to industry participants across Australia should be subject to at least annual inspection by relevant authorities to ensure both proof of life and quality of life. Currently, this only occurs in some states.
7. If participants wish to improve the greyhound racing industry's relationship with the Australian public, they must stop giving retired greyhounds to places where they will be experimented upon or used for dissection.

Interested in adopting or volunteering?

For a full list of industry and community-run rehoming groups, see [here](#).

Also, if you are considering the adoption of a pet greyhound, you can search nationally for available dogs near you [here](#).

If you want to volunteer to help with greyhound rehoming, just keep in mind that if you volunteer for a GAP, it is not a no-kill operation.

In fact, there have even been stories in the media about greyhound trainers who say they would have taken their dogs back from GAP if they'd known these hounds were to be euthanised.

Both industry and non- industry groups need foster carers and you can read more about that [here](#).

If you'd like to volunteer with CPG, see [here](#).

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Table 3: GAP vs community run rehoming

State/ territory	Year	Industry rehoming - GAP	Community rehoming	Total
NSW	2019/20	1032 GAP (246), industry participant rehoming to third parties (239), retained by industry participants (547). ¹⁵	373 ¹⁶	1405
	2018/19	1051 GAP (249), industry participant rehoming to third parties (285), retained by industry participants (517). ¹⁷	390 ¹⁸	1,441
	2017/18	415 ¹⁹ Third party rehoming not listed	1,395 ²⁰	1,810
	2016/17	498 ²¹		
	2015/16	324 ²²		

¹⁵ GWIC 2019/20 [Annual Report](#), p 47.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, p43.

Note - GRNSW says in its 2019 [Annual Report](#) (p9) that it assisted with 729 adoptions, but provides no verifying details about the small amount of funds paid to non-industry rescues. The NSW Government's [discussion paper](#) for the review of the *Greyhound Racing Act 2017* makes a major error by listing the figure of 729 as homed by GAP itself (p20)

Note - GRNSW's annual giveaway day was suspended due to COVID for 2020.

¹⁸ GWIC 2018/19 [Annual Report](#), p43 (see footnote 1 in the report).

¹⁹ GRNSW 2018 [Annual Report](#), p10. Note - this includes 41 given away in one day at Wentworth Park and no home check was done, as is done by non-industry rescues regarding the suitability of household, height of fences, etc. CPG checked this via email with the GAP program. GAP budget - p8, GRNSW 2018 Annual Report, \$1,639,430 spent in 2018 on re-homing (2017: \$1,189,609).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ GRNSW 2017 [Annual Report](#), p6.

²² GRNSW 2016 [Annual Report](#), p8.

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State/territory	Year	Industry rehoming - GAP	Community rehoming	Total
QLD	2019/20	516 GAP (209), industry participant rehoming to third parties (173), retired to industry participants (134) ²³	90 ²⁴	606
	2018/19	239 ²⁵	67 ²⁶	306
	2017/18	223 ²⁷	No info in annual report	-
	2016/17	318 ²⁸	As above	-
	2015/16	230 ²⁹	As above	-

²³ QRIC's Greyhound breeding, race injury and retirement 2019/20, p9. Also, QRIC annual report, p18 - note, this number is reported as 240 but 15 were returned and their fate is not listed.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ QRIC's [greyhound breeding, race injury and retirement report](#) 2019/20, p8. NB - in this report 239 were reported as having been retired to GAP and then 30 euthanised due to health or behavioural issues.

²⁶ This figure includes retired to other adoption programs only [QRIC injury report 2018-19](#), p8.

²⁷ QRIC 2017-18 [Annual Report](#), p6.

²⁸ QRIC 2016-17 [Annual Report](#), p6.

²⁹ [Brisbane Times](#), 15 February 2017.

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State/ territory	Year	Industry rehoming - GAP	Community rehoming	Total
VIC	2019/20	1,000 ³⁰	1,524 ³¹	2,524
	2018/19	987	1,644	2,631 ³²
	2017/18	1,163	1,415	2,578
	2016/17	1,314 (this number and the one for 2015/16 in the line below were inflated due to documented double-counting) ³³	1,483	2,797
	2015/16	798 (not reliable - see line above)	961	1,759 (3,012 were euthanised in this year) ³⁴

³⁰ GRV [annual report](#) 2019-20, p18.

³¹ Ibid.

³² All figures for Vic obtained from GRV [Annual Report](#) 2018-19, p 18.

³³ [Greyhound Safety Net](#) - "Because the muzzling exemption is only available to greyhounds adopted under contract with GRV, greyhounds adopted out by other groups but subsequently tested by GAP for the green collar [were] counted as GAP adoptions" - p 2, (2015) . Also see - AJP [media release](#) (Greyhound Racing Victoria GAP Figures "Questionable") and Herald-Sun [article](#), (2016).

³⁴ GRV [annual report](#) 2015-16, p12.

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State/ territory	Year	Industry rehoming - GAP	Community rehoming	Total
SA	2019/20	358 ³⁵	227 ³⁶	585
	2018/19	344 ³⁷	N/A ³⁸	344
	2017/18	389 ³⁹		
	2016/17	430 ⁴⁰		
	2015/16	307 ⁴¹	332 ⁴²	639
WA	2019/20	304 ⁴³	258 ⁴⁴	562
	2018/19	203	190 ⁴⁵	393
	2017/18	270	225 ⁴⁶	495
	2016/17	245	331 ⁴⁷	576
	2015/16	121	260 ⁴⁸	381

³⁵ GRSA [annual report](#) 2019/20, p 15.

³⁶ Ibid, p 12. Per the report, this figure includes rehomed by participants, adopted out through other rehoming programs or taken up by their owners (either for breeding or as a pet). Unfortunately, a more detailed breakdown is not available from GRSA which is not subject to FOI.

³⁷ GRSA [Annual Report](#) 2018-19, p 14.

³⁸ 721 greyhounds retired and all are apparently accounted for by industry rehoming/retaining or euthanasia in the GRSA report (p 17). However, this is extremely doubtful and the RPSCA has publicly slammed GRSA for the lack of transparency on two occasions.

³⁹ GRSA [Annual Report](#) 2017-18, p 10.

⁴⁰ GRSA [Annual Report](#) 2016-17, p 11.

⁴¹ GRSA [Annual Report](#) 2015-16, p3.

⁴² Ibid, p12. NB - This number includes those retired for breeding purposes, rehomed through external agencies or industry participants.

⁴³ RWWA's [Annual report](#) 2020, p4.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p40 - includes adopted through other greyhound rehoming organisations + to a third party.

⁴⁵ RWWA's Annual report 2019/20, op cit, p 34.

⁴⁶ RWWA's Annual Report [ANNUAL REPORT](#) 2018/19, op cit, p33.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p 33.

⁴⁸ RWWA's Annual Report 2017/18, op cit, p 30. Note - 492 greyhounds were euthanised this year - more than all those rehomed.

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State/ territory	Year	Industry rehoming - GAP	Community rehoming	Total
TAS	2019/20	138 ⁴⁹	95 ⁵⁰	233
	2018/19	89 ⁵¹	128 ⁵²	217
	2017/18	102 ⁵³	110 ⁵⁴	212 ⁵⁵
	2016/17	111 ⁵⁶	163	274 ⁵⁷
	2015/16	85 ⁵⁸		
	2014/15	63 ⁵⁹		
	2013/14	35 ⁶⁰		
NT	No data collected by government			

⁴⁹ Tasracing [Annual report](#) 2020, p 8.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ This was inaccurately reported as 96 in the 2019 annual report.

⁵² The actual figure may be slightly less if GAP rehomed greyhounds in the final two weeks of the FY.

⁵³ NB: 102 is the total reported on Tasracing's [website](#) (14 June 2019), but 116 is the total reported in Tasracing's [Annual Report](#) 2018, p 8.

⁵⁴ The number rehomed by non-GAP organisations in 2016/17 and 2017/18 was determined by deducting the total rehomed (stated in the Annual Report 2019) from those specifically identified as rehomed by GAP (stated in the Annual Report 2018).

⁵⁵ Tasracing Annual Report 2019, p 9.

⁵⁶ Tasracing Annual Report 2018, op cit, p 8.

⁵⁷ Tasracing Annual Report 2019, op cit, p 9.

⁵⁸ Tasracing [Annual Report](#) 2016, p 30.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Tasracing [Annual Report](#) 2015, p 19 -

Appendix 1

FOI – Victorian GAP euthanasia data

- Q.** Number of greyhounds who failed GAP pre-assessment?
- A.** There were 151 greyhounds that underwent a GAP pre-entry assessment in 2019-20 and did not pass the assessment.
- Q.** Number of greyhounds who failed subsequent assessments?
- A.** There were 129 greyhounds that entered GAP after passing a pre-entry assessment in 2019-20, who did not pass the second assessment.
- Q.** Number of greyhounds euthanised by GAP?
- A.** There were 142 greyhounds of the 1,201 that entered GAP in 2019-20 that have been euthanised at GAP for behavioural and/or medical reasons. This includes:
- a)** 61 of the 142 that entered GAP after passing a pre-entry assessment,
 - b)** 81 of the 142 that entered GAP from the industry or community without a pre-entry assessment including welfare intakes (participant and community) and greyhound returns (community).