



# Greyhound End of Life and Retirements

## South Australia, FY19/20

### Executive Summary

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Based on whelping figures contained in Greyhound Racing South Australia (GRSA) Annual Reports there were 329 greyhounds who should have been retained by their owner, rehomed privately or accepted by GAP or an animal rescue or adoption agency in South Australia in FY19/20. However, the GRSA Annual Report FY19/20 shows that 585 were retained by their owner, rehomed privately or accepted by GAP or an animal rescue or adoption agency.

The Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds (CPG) has analysed end of life and retirement figures for NSW, VIC and QLD. In all these states the number of greyhounds requiring adoption exceeds the number that were adopted. In SA this situation is reversed. The CPG analysis used publicly available data from GRSA Annual Reports.

The conclusion drawn by CPG is that GRSA is not publicly reporting all the relevant data. GRSA does not report how many greyhounds are registered to race in SA nor does it report how many greyhounds are imported into SA from other states. This conclusion assumes that the GRSA figures for greyhound whelping, end of life and retirement are accurate.

### Greyhound Lifecycle

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To understand the size and scale of the greyhound end of life and retirement in SA, it is necessary to examine the lifecycle of a greyhound. The information on the greyhound lifecycle has been extracted from the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Greyhound Racing Industry in NSW conducted in 2015/16.

#### Life expectancy

Greyhounds who do not participate in the greyhound racing industry have an approximate life expectancy of between 12 and 15 years.<sup>1</sup>

#### From birth to racer

Pups are usually weaned at around eight weeks and raised in litters until approximately six months of age. The rearing period ends when the pups are approximately 12-16 months. At this point the 'breaking-in' process begins. This involves training the dog to exit the starting box at speed and chase the lure. Following 'breaking-in' some pups are assessed as unsuitable or uncompetitive and do not progress further. The remainder will progress to pre-training. Greyhounds Australasia has reported that 40% of dogs whelped never race.

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<sup>1</sup> [Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Greyhound Racing Industry in NSW](#) Chapter 11.

## **The racing greyhound**

Greyhounds generally race from 18 months of age to 3.5-4.5 years. The average length of a racing career is 363 days.<sup>2</sup> Approximately 20% have five or less starts. At the end of their racing career greyhounds are retired. Retired dogs are retained for breeding purposes, adopted as pets or disappear.

## **The disappeared**

The Special Commission's report stated that "The normal life expectancy of a greyhound is between 12 and 15 years. Over the last 12 years 97,783 dogs have been whelped in NSW. Currently, there are about 6,809 registered greyhounds. Absent death through misadventure or illness, the average life expectancy of a greyhound indicates that another 90,974 greyhounds should still be alive. Some pups that were whelped in the last 18 months may be within litters, being reared, broken in or in pre-race training and not registered. However, even assuming that none of these juvenile animals (approximately 10,253) has been destroyed, where are the remaining 80,721 greyhounds? What has happened to them?"<sup>3</sup>

## **Greyhounds requiring adoption**

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### **Non-racers**

A Greyhounds Australasia document titled Crisis to Recovery Program marked Strictly Confidential and dated 23 April 2015 stated "7,000 greyhounds per year do not make it to the track (40% of greyhounds whelped)". The admission by GA that 40% of greyhounds do not make it to the track allows a calculation to be made of how many greyhounds whelped in SA never raced.

Based on the greyhound lifecycle, greyhounds whelped in SA in FY 17/18 and who were deemed unsuitable to race would have been eligible for adoption in FY 19/20.

The GRSA published whelping statistics show that 524 greyhounds were whelped in FY 17/18. 40% of these whelpings are 210 greyhounds. This number of dogs, deemed unsuitable to race, should have been adopted in FY 19/20.

### **Racers**

Greyhounds generally race from 18 months of age to 3.5-4.5 years. For ease of calculation, it is assumed that the racers retired at 4 years, thus the greyhounds whelped in FY 15/16 are the ones who should retire in FY 19/20. GRSA statistics for FY15/16 show that 418 greyhounds were whelped in FY15/16. Allowing that 40% of these dogs never raced and were retired 2 years after whelping the number of dogs whelped in FY15/16 who went on to race were 250. This number of dogs, having completed their racing careers, should have been adopted in FY 19/20.

## **Total greyhounds for adoption before reported deaths**

The number of greyhounds requiring adoption in FY 19/20 before taking into consideration the number of deaths is non-racers 210 plus racers 250 making a total of 460. This figure must be modified by subtracting the number of greyhounds reported to GRSA as having been euthanased or had died.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid Chapter 11

<sup>3</sup> Ibid para 1.2

## Greyhound deaths FY19/20 <sup>4</sup>

Medical euthanasia all causes	98
Natural or unknown causes	33
<b>Total deaths all causes FY19/20</b>	<b>131</b>

## Total number of greyhounds requiring adoption in FY19/20

The number of non-racing and racing dogs which should have been adopted in FY 19/20 is 460 less 131 greyhounds reported as dying in FY19/20 making a total of **329** greyhounds eligible for adoption in FY19/20.

## Greyhound retirements (adoption)

The GRSA Annual Report FY19/20 published the following numbers for greyhound retirements in FY19/20:

Retained for breeding	63
Rehomed privately by owner, trainer or adoption agency	164
Greyhounds as Pets (GAP)	358
<b>Total</b>	<b>585</b>

## Whelpings versus Adoptions

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Based on the number of greyhounds whelped in South Australia 329 dogs should have been eligible for adoption in FY19/20. However, GRSA figures state that 585 dogs were adopted. CPG has calculated figures for NSW, QLD and VIC. In all these states the number of greyhounds born in the 2- and 4-year periods prior to FY19/20 exceeds the number that died or were adopted. In SA there were more dogs adopted than were born in the preceding 2- and 4-year periods. There are two possible explanations. There was a significant number of greyhounds imported into SA from other states that go unreported or the GRSA whelping, death and rehoming figures are wrong.

## Imports from other States

NSW claims that it is an exporter of greyhounds to other states. Figures for greyhounds imported into SA in FY15/16 and FY 17/18 are not publicly available. Because these figures are not publicly available the number of greyhounds requiring rehoming in FY19/20 could well exceed 329. In order to calculate the number of greyhounds requiring adoption in SA, GRSA must publish the number of greyhounds imported into SA from other states.

## Future Plans

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GRSA is aiming to increase the capacity of its own Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP SA) from the 307 greyhounds rehomed in 2015-16, up to 450 in the following year, and then to 600 by mid-2018.<sup>5</sup> In FY19/20 GRSA reported that 358 dogs had been rehomed through GAP not the 600 foreshadowed in the FY15/16 report.

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<sup>4</sup> GRSA Annual Report FY19/20 page 15

<sup>5</sup> GRSA Annual report FY15/16 page 11