

GREYHOUND RETIREMENT AND END OF LIFE REPORT JULY – SEPTEMBER 2019

Each quarter the Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission (the Commission) will publish a report providing data in relation to retirements, euthanasia and deaths of greyhounds registered with the Commission in NSW. The publication of such data is designed to provide transparent, accurate and timely reporting of these events. This is the first such report.

Retirements

Retired greyhounds no longer race and usually become pets or are retained in the greyhound racing industry for breeding. The Commission was notified of 352 greyhound retirements that occurred between July – September 2019. (Table 1).

Of the notifications received, just over one-third (51%) of retired greyhounds were retained by their registered owner or trainer as a pet, and these dogs stay registered with the Commission. A further 18% (63) of retired greyhounds were notified as being rehomed privately by their owner or trainer to another registered participant or to someone outside the greyhound racing industry.

The remaining greyhounds were rehomed to pet rescue or rehoming organisations. The largest single rehoming program is the Greyhounds As Pets (GAP) program managed by GRNSW, and the Commission was notified of 30 (9%) retirements to GAP. Notifications showed that other animal rescue and adoption agencies accepted 77 (22%) retired greyhounds.

Table 1: Greyhound retirements reported to the Commission between July – September 2019

Destination	Number	%
Retained by owner or trainer	178	51
Rehomed privately by owner or trainer ¹	63	18
Accepted by Greyhounds As Pets (GAP)	30	9
Accepted by another animal rescue or adoption agency ²	77	22
Retired for export ³	4	1
Total	352	

¹ Rehomed to another registered participant or member of the public as a pet

² Accepted by another animal rescue or adoption agency includes pet rescue organisations, RSPCA or Council animal care facilities.

³ Figures based on notifications received by the Commission between July – September 2019.

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Euthanasia

A total of 131 greyhound euthanasia events were reported between July – September 2019. Eighty-nine (68%) of these were performed by private veterinarians for medical reasons such as injury or illness, and one (1%) by a person other than a veterinarian in emergency circumstances. The injuries most commonly reported by veterinarians included persistent pain and/or incapacity due to severe hock fractures or spinal injury. A wide variety of illnesses precipitated euthanasia of greyhounds, including cancers, neurological conditions, gastric dilation and volvulus, arthritis and various co-morbidities associated with age.

Ten greyhounds (8%) were euthanased by Commission veterinarians due to a catastrophic injury that occurred as a result of racing.

The Commission's Greyhound Rehoming Policy requires greyhound owners to make genuine attempts to rehome any greyhounds that they do not wish to retain. This requirement did not apply where a veterinarian certified that a greyhound is suffering from an intractable condition or injury that causes significant pain or discomfort or a marked reduction in the quality of life, or where a greyhound has been assessed as unsuitable for rehoming – usually due to adverse behaviour towards humans or other animals – after assessed by GAP at least once. Some 20 greyhounds (15%) were euthanased after a registered veterinarian certified that the dog was behaviourally unsuitable for rehoming. Eleven greyhounds (8%) were euthanased after rehoming attempts failed.

Table 2: Greyhound euthanasias reported to the Commission between July – September 2019

Cause	Number	%
Euthanasia (not at racetrack) due to injury, illness, or an emergency ⁴	90	69
Euthanasia after registered veterinarian certified that the greyhound was behaviourally unsuitable for rehoming	20	15
Euthanasia at racetrack due to injury	10	8
Euthanasia after rehoming attempts failed	11	8
Total	131	

⁴ Euthanasia performed by a non- veterinarian in the case of an emergency. The circumstances surrounding any emergency euthanasia are examined by the Commission to ensure the action was warranted and in accordance with Commission policies.

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Deaths

A total of 36 greyhound deaths was reported between July – September 2019 of which 14 (39%) were from natural causes (not involving accidental causes or race incidents). Of the remaining greyhound deaths, 11 were due to illness/age (31%), 5 due to accidental causes (14%), 4 due to a non-race day related injury (11%), and 2 due to death at a race track (6%).

Table 3: Greyhound deaths reported to the Commission between July – September 2019

Cause	Number	%
Deceased due to accidental causes	5	14
Deceased due to illness and old age	11	31
Deceased due to injury	4	11
Deceased due to natural causes	14	39
Deceased due to track injury	2	6
Total	36	