

# BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR GREYHOUND REHOMING



# Foreword from the Chief Commissioner

Appropriate rehoming benefits the greyhound racing industry, pet owners and above all, the greyhounds themselves.

These beautiful dogs require minimal grooming and surprisingly little exercise, making them wonderful pets even for city dwellers.

Following concerns expressed in 2016 about the fate of retired racing greyhounds, individuals and organisations across New South Wales stepped up to find homes for greyhounds that are retired or not suited to racing.

Greyhound Racing NSW, through its Greyhounds as Pets program, rehomes hundreds of retired greyhounds every year. Equally important, though not as well recognised, are the many individuals and community groups who take in retired greyhounds and work tirelessly to find appropriate homes for them.

Rehoming organisations do this important work for the love of greyhounds, but there are disappointingly few resources available to assist them.

The role of the Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission is to protect and promote the welfare of greyhounds and the integrity of the sport of greyhound racing in NSW. Through its stewards, veterinarians and inspectors, the Commission works with greyhound owners, breeders, and trainers to ensure that they comply with the NSW Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice and the Greyhound Racing Rules.

The Commission is uniquely placed to advise on best practice in the rehoming of greyhounds, and in 2022 I asked the Greyhound Industry Animal Welfare Committee to make recommendations on best practice in the rehoming of greyhounds.

The Animal Welfare Committee is an invaluable source of expertise on animal welfare matters as they relate to greyhounds, comprising representatives from the greyhound racing industry, RSPCA NSW, Greyhound Racing NSW, the NSW Chief Veterinary Officer, and a specialist in animal behaviour.

The Committee worked vigilantly to develop practical guidelines that will benefit greyhound rehoming organisations of all different kinds, providing them with a model of best practice in their care for, and rehoming of, these beautiful dogs.

As Chief Commissioner of the Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission, I am pleased to endorse these Best Practice Guidelines for Greyhound Rehoming Organisations.

Brenton (Alby) Taylor  
**Chief Commissioner**  
**Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission**



## 1. OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations should:
  - 1.1.1 ensure that any rehoming undertaken is in the best interests of the greyhound;
  - 1.1.2 make every effort to ensure that rehoming is successful;
  - 1.1.3 practice and promote responsible pet ownership.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 These guidelines have been produced for the benefit of Greyhound Rehoming Organisations.
- 2.2 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations are organisations of any size, whose principal purpose is the rehoming, adoption or transfer of greyhounds, whether or not the organisation has been designated for that purpose by the Office of Local Government in their administration of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* (NSW).
- 2.3 The Greyhound Industry Animal Welfare Committee endorses these Guidelines.

## 3. PURPOSE

- 3.1 Responsible rehoming of retired racing greyhounds benefits greyhound owners, the community and most of all, greyhounds.
- 3.2 The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that rehoming is undertaken in the best interests of the greyhound and that Greyhound Rehoming Organisations comply with relevant legal and animal welfare obligations.

## 4. ACCEPTING SURRENDER AND CONFIRMING OWNERSHIP OF GREYHOUNDS

- 4.1 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations must comply with their legal responsibilities and be transparent in their dealings in relation to greyhounds.

- 4.2 Prior to accepting a greyhound into their care, a Greyhound Rehoming Organisation must determine that the person relinquishing, surrendering or otherwise transferring the greyhound is the legal owner of the greyhound. Where a greyhound is owned by a syndicate, the Syndicate Manager as nominated to the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC) has the same rights and obligations as the legal owner.
- 4.3 Where the person relinquishing the dog is doing so on behalf of another person, the Greyhound Rehoming Organisation must seek proof of the owner's consent to relinquish the dog. Prior to accepting the surrender of a greyhound, a Greyhound Rehoming Organisation must determine that the owner has legally authorised the person presenting the dog to relinquish, surrender or transfer the greyhound.
- 4.4 A Greyhound Rehoming Organisation must require the owner to complete, sign and have witnessed a surrender form, and will provide a surrender form to the owner for that purpose.
- 4.5 A Greyhound Rehoming Organisation should advise the owner of their obligations to notify GWIC of the retirement of the greyhound.

## 5. GREYHOUND NOT TO BE ACCEPTED

- 5.1 In accepting greyhounds into their program, shelter or care, Greyhound Rehoming Organisations must take into account the need to ensure good welfare for greyhounds, and ensure reasonable policies are adopted to protect the safety of people and other animals.
- 5.2 A Greyhound Rehoming Organisation must not accept a greyhound if the greyhound is:
  - 5.2.1 a declared dangerous dog, or
  - 5.2.2 the subject of a notice of intention to declare it a dangerous dog.

## 6. HEALTH

- 6.1 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations must act to ensure the good health and wellbeing of greyhounds in their care.
- 6.2 Greyhounds should be examined by a registered veterinarian prior to transfer to a Greyhound Rehoming Organisation.
- 6.3 If the person surrendering the greyhound cannot provide evidence of recent veterinary examination by a registered veterinarian prior to transfer, upon acceptance a Greyhound Rehoming Organisation should ensure the greyhound:
  - 6.3.1 is examined by a registered veterinarian;
  - 6.3.2 receives up to date vaccinations in accordance with current best practice vaccination guidelines, or as directed by a registered veterinarian;
  - 6.3.3 receives appropriate parasite control (for example: worm, flea, tick and heartworm treatment).
- 6.4 Veterinary treatment must be provided to the greyhound as required or directed by a registered veterinarian.

## 7. GREYHOUND WITH EXISTING HEALTH CONDITION

- 7.1 A greyhound with significant existing illness, injury or behavioural condition is not to be rehomed unless:
  - 7.1.1 the Greyhound Rehoming Organisation is satisfied, based on veterinary advice, that the greyhound will have a good quality of life; and
  - 7.1.2 veterinary conditions known to the Greyhound Rehoming Organisation have been disclosed to the prospective owner; and
  - 7.1.3 the Greyhound Rehoming Organisation is satisfied that the new owner can care for the greyhound.

## 8. DESEXING

- 8.1 Unless advised otherwise by a veterinarian, all greyhounds must be desexed before being rehomed.

## 9. BEHAVIOUR

- 9.1 Prior to rehoming a Greyhound Rehoming Organisation should present the greyhound to a registered veterinarian for assessment as to its suitability to be rehomed.
- 9.2 Whilst the greyhound is in their care, a Greyhound Rehoming Organisation should monitor the greyhound for concerns around temperament, behaviour and pet readiness, and assess its suitability for rehoming with prospective owners/adopters.
  - 9.2.1 Where a Greyhound Rehoming Organisation has concerns about a greyhound's behaviour, they should seek additional advice from a veterinarian or qualified animal behaviourist and undertake a behaviour modification program as directed;





## 10. HUSBANDRY

10.1 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations must:

- 10.1.1 ensure that greyhounds in their care are provided with adequate food, drink and shelter;
- 10.1.2 provide veterinary treatment where required to greyhounds in their care;
- 10.1.3 ensure the greyhounds are kept in an environment and handled in a way which meets their needs

10.2 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations, including staff or volunteers engaged by them, must comply with the requirements of applicable animal welfare legislation in the keeping of greyhounds, including:

- The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (POCTA) and its associated Regulations and Codes of Practice where they apply (e.g. the *NSW Animal Welfare Code of Practice No 5 - Dogs and Cats in Animal Boarding establishments*);

- The *Companion Animals Act 1998* and its associated Regulations; and,
- any applicable Local Government legislation, regulations or codes of practice.

## 11. DEATH OR EUTHANASIA

- 11.1 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations accept that in some cases euthanasia may be in a greyhound's best interests.
- 11.2 A greyhound in the care of a Greyhound Rehoming Organisation must be provided with veterinary treatment where reasonably required, and a greyhound may be euthanased in accordance with s26AA *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (NSW). Section 26AA provides that an animal may be euthanased where, in the opinion of a veterinary practitioner, the animal is so severely injured or diseased or in such a physical condition that it is cruel to keep it alive.

- 11.3 Euthanasia of any greyhound kept by a Greyhound Rehoming Organisation must be carried out by a veterinary practitioner in accordance with applicable veterinary standards.

## 12. PRE-REHOMING COMMUNICATIONS

- 12.1 Effective communication with prospective greyhound owners is crucial to ensure that greyhounds are rehomed successfully. Greyhound Rehoming Organisations should discuss the husbandry, veterinary and behavioural needs of a greyhound with a prospective owner prior to any transfer.
- 12.2 A pre-rehoming conversation may include the following:
- 12.2.1 the prospective owner's expectations and reasons for wanting to adopt a greyhound;
  - 12.2.2 responsibilities of greyhound ownership (e.g. costs, veterinary care, registration);
  - 12.2.3 the greyhound's needs e.g. diet, exercise, socialisation;
  - 12.2.4 the circumstances of the prospective owner (e.g. type of housing, lifestyle);
  - 12.2.5 compatibility with any other household members and other animals;
  - 12.2.6 any special needs that the greyhound may have (e.g. health or behavioural issues);
  - 12.2.7 any relevant laws related to keeping a greyhound.
- 12.3 A Greyhound Rehoming Organisation will provide any relevant clinical or historical records from veterinary or other service providers to a prospective owner before any rehoming.

## 13. GREYHOUND NOT TO BE REHOMED

- 13.1 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations should not rehome a greyhound where:
- 13.1.1 they have reason to believe the greyhound will be kept in an environment or conditions that may be detrimental to the greyhound's health or welfare;
  - 13.1.2 the proposed owner's interactions with the greyhound or other animals raise concerns about the prospective welfare of the greyhound;
  - 13.1.3 the Greyhound Rehoming Organisation considers that the proposed owner is unlikely to be able to provide adequate care for the greyhound;
  - 13.1.4 the proposed owner is aged under 18;
  - 13.1.5 the proposed adoption would breach government regulations;
  - 13.1.6 the proposed owner has been convicted of, or charged with, an animal cruelty offence;
  - 13.1.7 the proposed owner intends to sell the greyhound to another person.
- 13.2 The Greyhound Rehoming Organisation will make reasonable inquiries in relation to the suitability of the prospective environment, including inquiries as to the presence of animals or the children at the property.

## 14. TRANSPORTATION

- 14.1 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations and transport services engaged by them transport greyhounds in accordance with standards set out in the *Animal Welfare Code of Practice No 1 – Companion Animal Transport Agencies*.

## 15. PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO REHOMING FAILURE

- 15.1 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations aim for successful rehoming of greyhounds wherever possible.
- 15.2 To avoid failure of rehoming, a Greyhound Rehoming Organisation may:
  - 15.2.1 arrange a pre-rehoming “meeting” between the greyhound and any prospective new owner and any other animals owned by the prospective owner;
  - 15.2.2 follow up the new owner to assess the success of rehoming;
  - 15.2.3 offer a “trial period” or foster arrangement to prospective owners to allow them to determine whether permanent rehoming is viable;
- 15.3 A Greyhound Rehoming Organisation should provide a written rehoming agreement to all new greyhound owners.
- 15.4 A Greyhound Rehoming Organisation should, within a reasonable time following transfer, accept the return of any greyhound rehomed.

## 16. RECORD KEEPING

- 16.1 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations must be transparent and comply with their legal responsibilities.
- 16.2 A Greyhound Rehoming Organisation should maintain records including the following information:
  - 16.2.1 sex, name, including racing name, of each greyhound in their custody;
  - 16.2.2 the greyhound’s identification information (i.e. microchip number, ear tattoo);
  - 16.2.3 the date on which the animal arrives into its care or custody;
  - 16.2.4 the date and details of vaccinations, parasite control, and veterinary treatment given while in their care;

- 16.2.5 the date on which the animal leaves its care or custody;
- 16.2.6 the person and place from which the greyhound was sourced (e.g. a trainer, a Council pound, a veterinarian);
- 16.2.7 where possible, a signed surrender form in accordance with Clause 4 (above);
- 16.2.8 the name and address of the greyhound’s current custodian, including any employees, volunteers and foster carers associated with the Greyhound Rehoming Organisation;
- 16.2.9 the outcome for the greyhound (e.g. rehomed, died, euthanased);
- 16.2.10 the destination of any greyhound rehomed (i.e. new owner’s name, address).

## 17. REGISTRATION

- 17.1 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations must complete a Change of Owner form when a greyhound is rehomed, and submit the form to the local council.
- 17.2 A Greyhound Rehoming Organisation should provide new owners of rehomed greyhounds with:
  - 17.2.1 a copy of the Change of Owner form; and,
  - 17.2.2 information regarding the requirement to complete and submit the Change of Owner form to their local Council.

## 18. TRACKING OF REGISTERED GREYHOUNDS

- 18.1 Effective tracking of greyhounds registered under the *Greyhound Racing Act 2017* is essential to protect the welfare of greyhounds and improve welfare standards in the greyhound racing industry.
- 18.2 Greyhound Rehoming Organisations should notify GWIC of:
- 18.2.1 any greyhounds that enter their custody;
  - 18.2.2 any greyhounds that they rehome, or assist in rehoming; and,
  - 18.2.3 the death of any greyhound in their care.

