



# RACING TO RETIREMENT GUIDE

*Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) is committed to a racing industry where the safety and welfare of greyhounds from birth to racing and retirement is paramount. This guide contains some helpful advice which will assist you in planning a successful transition from training and racing to retirement for your greyhound.*

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**THE WIND-DOWN PERIOD IS  
AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE  
TRANSITION FROM THE TRACK  
TO A PET HOME**





## Identifying a Forever Home

As a racing greyhound owner, you are responsible for planning for the retirement of your greyhound regardless of whether you are retiring it prior to racing, or at the end of its racing career. You should identify at the outset where your greyhound is going to live out the rest of its life, being aware that greyhounds generally live to about 10 - 12 years of age.

Greyhounds make great pets. Even when in full race training, they are generally placid, well-mannered and easy to handle dogs. They are usually friendly, affectionate, lazy, calm, clean, loving, trusting and good-natured which makes them very easy to live with.

As an owner it is your responsibility to re-home your greyhound when it is no longer suitable for racing. Rehoming of greyhounds most commonly occurs through friends and family of owners, trainers and contacts of other participants in the industry. Don't forget that if you re-home your greyhound privately you are required, to update the address details of the greyhound's new home in Fast Track. The new owner will need to register the greyhound with their local council.

Local and specialist greyhound re-homing agencies can also assist you in identifying a forever home for your greyhound.

**MOST GREYHOUNDS  
ARE RE-HOMED  
WITHOUT A GREEN  
COLLAR**

## Local Racing Rules

From 1 October 2017, Local Rule 42.6 (LR.42.6) requires owners of greyhounds to provide a minimum of 28 days wind down from racing relating activities and to undertake specific minimum re-homing attempts before making any decision to euthanase a healthy greyhound.

Owners must retain records of the re-homing efforts made and provide evidence to GRV on request (the checklist and record sheet at the back of this booklet can help you with your records). Euthanasia of a healthy greyhound must be the absolute last resort. If following the wind down period, re-homing efforts are unsuccessful and a decision to euthanase is taken, the owner must submit a Notice of Intention (NoI) to euthanase their greyhound at least 14 days prior to euthanasia. The only exceptions to the re-homing and NoI requirements relate to euthanasia on legal or medical grounds or when the greyhound has been certified by a veterinarian to have significant behavioural characteristics that negatively impact on it's suitability as a pet

Non-compliance with LR 42.6 is a Serious Offence.

A full list of the local rules and FAQs, including detailed information about LR42.6 can be found at [www.greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/rules-of-racing](http://www.greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/rules-of-racing)

## Rules for Retired Greyhounds

All greyhounds including GAP Green Collared greyhounds must be kept on a leash at all times when away from their secure home property. Greyhounds are not permitted to be off leash even in designated council 'off leash' exercise areas. The only exception to this rule is that a greyhound may be off leash at a slipping track or when it is taking part in obedience training classes.

All greyhounds must be muzzled in public at all times unless they have been awarded a GAP Green Collar.

Details regarding the rules for greyhounds in Victoria can be found here:

[www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/greyhounds-in-victoria](http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/greyhounds-in-victoria)



# Transitioning to Retirement – the Wind Down Period

Regardless of what age your greyhound retires you will need to make some adjustments to their feeding regime and provide opportunities for socialisation during the wind down period. You can record your progress in the booklet from page 8 and this information should be passed to the greyhound's new owner.

## Racing and Trialling

Local Rule 42.6 requires that greyhounds undertake a 28-day wind down period from all race related activities, to give the greyhound the best chance to be re-homed. It is important that once you have decided to transition your greyhound to retirement you no longer train, race or trial them. This will assist the greyhound to adjust to its new life as a pet.

Please note that a greyhound can be re-homed at any time during the wind down period if a suitable home is found. As such, if an owner or trainer has a new home arranged for the greyhound, that greyhound may be retired and re-homed immediately following its last race or any other racing related activities or if a home is found during the wind down period, the greyhound can be rehomed before the 28 days is up. The purpose of imposing a mandatory wind down period is to provide greyhounds at the end of their racing career with the best chance of being re-homed to avoid euthanasia.

## Feeding/Weight

Retired greyhounds should be allowed to gain some additional weight over and above their racing weight. The amount needed will vary, but should on average be at least two kilograms. Ask your veterinarian for guidance on this if you have any questions or concerns.

## Housing

When re-homed, many greyhounds will have the run of a suburban garden block so it is important to provide them with an opportunity to get used to larger spaces. During the wind down period greyhounds should be provided with at least 15 square metres in a grassed area to allow self exercise and play.

## Exercise and Socialisation

Exercise remains an important part of your greyhound's life. Following the conclusion of racing, the exercise regime should be slowly decreased until the regime consists of two, twenty minutewalks on leash per day, remembering that the greyhound must be muzzled when out in public.

During the wind down period, socialisation activities should increase. Activities could include:

- exposure to different flooring surfaces such as carpet, concrete, tiles, wood floors, bricks and stairs;
- increasing exposure to people in a non-training/racing setting which should include play time and may include obedience training;
- travelling inside a car as opposed to in a dog trailer. You should help your greyhound learn to jump up into the car without you lifting it. Please remember that all dogs should be appropriately harnessed and attached to a seatbelt under Victorian road safety laws, and must not travel in the front seat;
- provided with daily periods of isolation from other greyhounds and humans, starting with 30 minutes and gradually increasing to three to four hours in duration;
- exposure to a variety of noises: children and family sounds, televisions, radios, cars, trucks, motorbikes, lawn mowers, trains, household appliances, vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers;
- exposure to small dogs and other larger dogs (the greyhound should be muzzled and on leash at all times – the interaction should be immediately ceased if the greyhound shows signs of predatory or aggressive behaviour including barking, lunging, growling, snapping and stalking).

**Exposure to other dogs, animals, and young children should be done in a controlled environment. The greyhound should be muzzled, on leash and under the control of a responsible adult at all times.**

**The interaction should immediately cease if the greyhound shows signs of predatory or aggressive behaviour including barking, lunging, growling, snapping and stalking.**

## Veterinary Check

To assist you in transitioning your greyhound to retirement a veterinary check should be undertaken to identify if they are carrying any lasting racing injuries or health conditions which require short or long-term treatment. Their teeth should be cleaned and nails trimmed. Your greyhound should also have a current C5 vaccination, and up to parasite treatment.

## Handling and basic pet skills

Greyhounds should be taught basic pet skills for example walking on a leash, staying calm when washed, appropriate toileting and coming when called.



## Background on greyhound behaviour

A racing greyhound has many traits, including a natural desire to chase ('prey drive'), athletic ability, and an adaptable mental attitude. Adaptability has a genetic basis and greyhounds are generally considered to be a mentally adaptable breed. This means that greyhounds have the ability to fully adjust from a racing career to a family environment as a pet, especially when supported by proper socialisation, husbandry, rearing and training practices during its life.

Greyhounds that make ideal pets are socialised early and throughout their lifetime with other dogs of various breeds, cats, people (including small children), and a range of situations and environments outside of the race kennel. Increased socialisation at the end of a greyhound's racing career is very important; however, this should build on experiences from throughout the greyhound's life and during a number of key periods.

### • Primary Socialisation Period:

The first part of rearing a greyhound, critical to success, is commonly called the 'socialisation' or 'critical learning' period, which occurs at approximately 3-17 weeks of age. Learning continues beyond this, but it happens more slowly. Greyhounds need to be exposed to as wide a range of stimuli as possible at this age, including dedicated periods of human and other animal contact and socialisation, i.e. not limited to feeding time. Unfortunately, what is learnt can be forgotten so ongoing socialisation and exposure to various situations throughout their lifetime is required.

### • Fear Impact Periods:

Greyhounds are particularly sensitive to fear during two key periods of their life, commonly around 9-10 weeks and 9-10 months old (but may also occur outside of these times). During these periods greyhounds are prone to developing excessive fear of a particular stimuli that they have a bad experience with. This can develop into generalised fear where they become timid or a 'nervous wreck'. These dogs can become aggressive in some circumstances (commonly 'fear biting') and present challenges when it comes to re-homing.

It is important to know the periods of life where fear responses are greater and take active steps to prevent negative experiences, as well as appropriate, positive training to correct inappropriate fear responses if they

develop. Your veterinarian or other qualified animal behaviour specialist can assist you with training and support in this area – it may take only one session to give you the tools you need to help a frightened greyhound stop its inappropriate behaviours.

### Prey Drive and Aggression

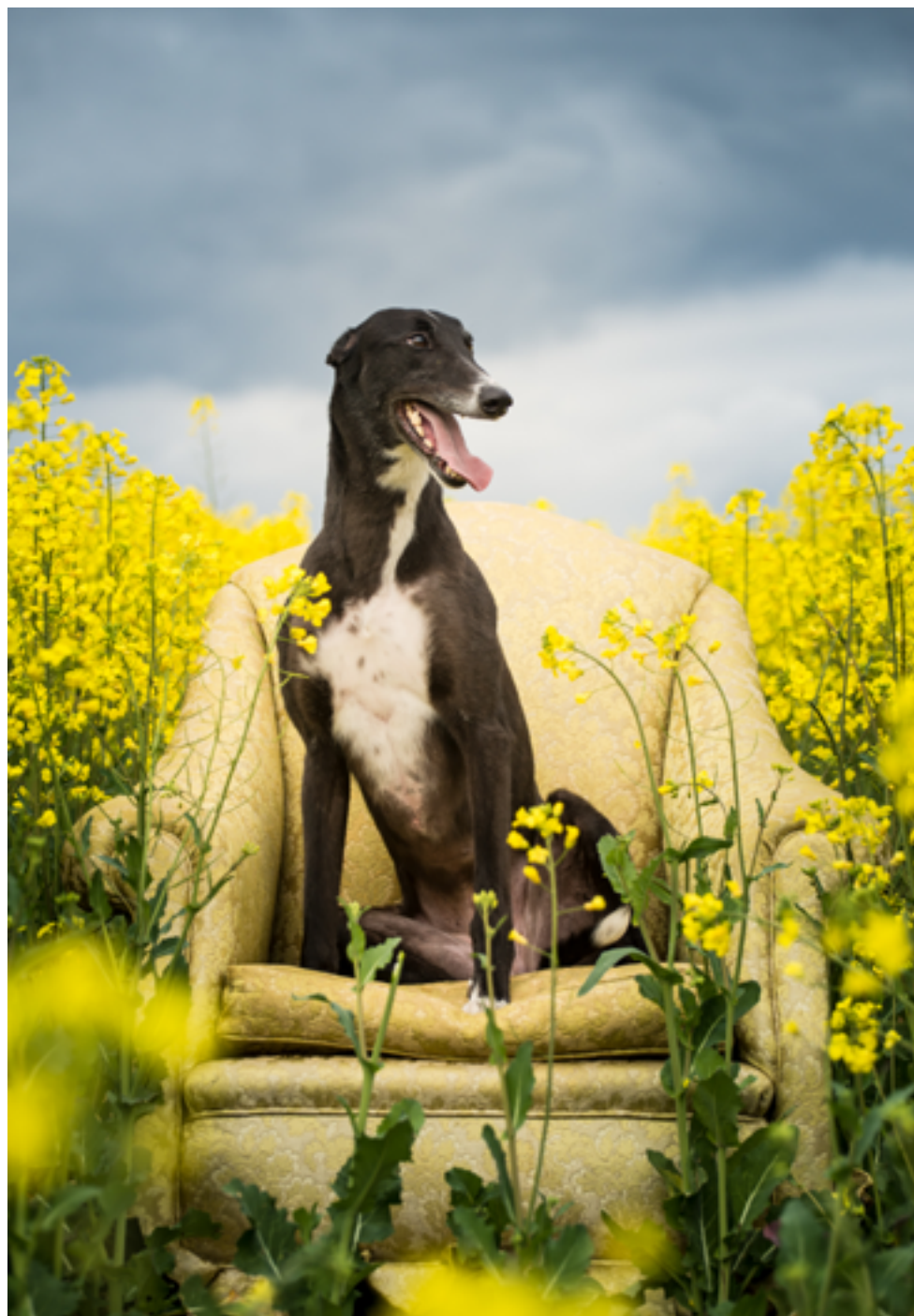
Prey drive is the instinct of a predator to find, pursue and capture prey. Prey drive has a very strong genetic basis and has been shown to be a positive experience for the animal. It is a different behaviour to aggression, which also may have a genetic basis but is far more influenced by environment and how the animal is treated.

Greyhound racing utilises prey drive to train greyhounds to chase the racing lure. In many greyhounds, prey drive is so strong that the chance to satisfy the drive is its own reward, and nothing additional is required to compel the greyhound to perform the chase behaviour.

Prey drive cannot be removed from greyhounds but can potentially be modified or suppressed; for example, a greyhound can learn not to chase while on a leash. Importantly, greyhounds can learn to identify other breeds of dogs (i.e. small fluffy dogs) as dogs and not prey animals. It requires a caring and appropriately educated adult to assist a greyhound to learn and reinforce healthy behaviours and expectations.

In contrast, aggression is driven by emotional factors, is a negative experience for the animal, and can be more difficult to suppress or modify. For example, aggression might be triggered by physical mistreatment of the greyhound during training. Fortunately, greyhounds are a breed with naturally low aggressive tendencies. If your greyhound shows any signs of aggression, you should seek advice from a veterinarian or other professional canine behaviour specialist as early as possible.





# The GAP Process

GRV provides re-homing support in two ways through its Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP); firstly by facilitating adoptions and secondly by providing GAP Green Collar assessments for retired greyhounds already living in the community.

Please note that GRV participants do not have automatic assurance of entry into GAP for their greyhounds. GAP represents only part of the re-homing efforts required by GRV participants under the Local Racing Rules. All owners are required take responsibility for re-homing their greyhounds at the end of their racing career.

While GRV is continuing to expand GAP to allow it to continue to grow its annual adoption numbers, the program has very high demand, which can mean long waiting periods before entry.

You can place your greyhound on the waiting list for GAP by booking a Pre-entry Assessment.

Just call GRV on (03) 8329 1100 or email

[gapbooking@grv.org.au](mailto:gapbooking@grv.org.au).

To be eligible for a place at a Pre-entry Assessment, your greyhound must have completed the 28-day wind down period (before the date of assessment) and have a current C5 vaccination administered at least 10 days prior to the testing day. Please note that new vaccination requirements were introduced on 1 March 2018 to better protect against Kennel Cough. Please check with GRV for full details of the vaccinations required.

GAP uses a standardised National Temperament Test (the GAPNTT) to assess the suitability of a greyhound to be adopted with a GAP Green Collar. Greyhounds awarded with a GAP Green Collar are permitted by law to be un-muzzled in public.

The GAP process includes the following steps:





## What is temperament testing?

The GAPNTT is designed to assess the suitability of a greyhound:

1. to be a suitable and sociable pet; and
2. to be adopted with a GAP Green Collar and therefore be permitted by law to be un-muzzled in public.

Temperament testing generally occurs over a number of days during which time the GAP staff will observe the behaviour of your greyhound to see how well it is socialised with other greyhounds, smaller dogs, and people.

**TEMPERAMENT  
TESTING IS THE  
PATHWAY TO A  
GREEN COLLAR**

## Pre-Entry Assessment

The Pre-entry Assessment is a shorter version of the full GAPNTT and primarily assesses the greyhound's sociability towards people and behaviour around small dogs. As the assessment is completed at a point in time, future behaviour cannot be predicted with 100% certainty. The assessment, therefore is not a perfect test, but it is the best tool we currently have to predict suitability as a pet and for a GAP Green Collar.

Should your greyhound be unsuccessful at passing the Pre-entry Assessment initially, the GAP staff will provide you with advice regarding additional training and socialisation activities you can undertake with your greyhound. Not passing a Pre-entry Assessment does not mean that the greyhound will not pass on another day nor be suitable as a pet. A period of additional socialisation and/or obedience training at home with you will assist some greyhounds in passing the Pre-entry Assessment on a future date.

## Full GAPNTT Assessment

A greyhound that successfully passes the Pre-entry Assessment is transferred immediately to GAP where it will undergo the full GAPNTT. If it passes, it is de-sexed (if not de-sexed already) and then prepared for adoption. Where possible, greyhounds that are inconclusive in temperament testing at GAP are fostered out to loving homes to provide them with additional time to adjust to a domestic environment.

Greyhounds that are not yet suitable for adoption with a GAP Green Collar will be returned to their owners consistent with their registration preferences. GAP staff will provide recommendations on what actions need to be taken by you before the greyhound can be re-tested at a future date. Not passing a temperament test does not mean that the greyhound will not be an excellent pet, it just means that it may not be suitable to be un-muzzled in public. Remember the greyhound is assessed at one point in time and behaviour can and will usually change over time. A period of additional socialisation and/or obedience training will assist some greyhounds in passing the temperament test on another day.



## Retirement Process Checklist

To assist participants with best preparing the greyhound for re-homing, The Racing to Retirement Checklist booklet on the following pages contains a list which includes activities for you to undertake with your greyhound during the wind down period. The checklist will also help you through the retirement process and will assist you in ensuring compliance with the requirements of Local Rule 42.6.





# RACING TO RETIREMENT CHECKLIST



# Racing to Retirement Checklist



## Greyhound Details

Greyhound Racing Name:

Greyhound Kennel Name:

Microchip Number:

Ear Brand:

Owner:

Trainer:

## Wind Down Period

Last race:

Last training session:

Date 28-day wind down complete: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

## Wind Down Activities

### Housing

I have transitioned my greyhound out of the racing kennels. Yes / No Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The greyhound is currently housed in a \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ metre space.

With a kennel Yes / No or with a bed Yes / No

The greyhound is housed with my family including (eg. 2 adults 1 child and 1 family dog)

The greyhound has company (dog or human) for \_\_\_\_\_ mins / hours per day.

The greyhound has no company (dog or human) for \_\_\_\_\_ mins / hours per day.

## Health Details

Veterinary Check (Date):

Name of Veterinarian:

C5 Vaccination(Date):

Worming:

Flea Treatment Last Applied:

Racing Weight:

Current Weight:

What is the Greyhound Being Fed?



# Racing to Retirement Checklist

## Socialisation

### Walking

- ☐ Walking for 20 mins on a leash with a muzzle in public (twice a day).
- ☐ Walked on carpet
- ☐ Walked on floorboards
- ☐ Walked on tiles
- ☐ Walked on bricks
- ☐ Walked up/down stairs

### Socialisation

- ☐ Played with my family

- 
- ☐ Undertaken obedience training

- 
- ☐ Met a larger dog \*
  - ☐ Met a smaller dog \*
  - ☐ Met other animals e.g. cat, sheep, horses\*

\*Exposure to other dogs and other animals should be done in a controlled environment. The greyhound should be muzzled and on leash at all times – the interaction should be immediately ceased if the greyhound shows signs of predatory or aggressive behaviour including barking, lunging, growling, snapping and stalking.

### Noises

- ☐ Children and family sounds
- ☐ Communication sounds: television, telephone, radio
- ☐ Transport sounds: cars, trucks, motorbikes
- ☐ Machines and household appliances vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers
- ☐ Other loud sounds: e.g. sirens, fireworks, thunder and smoke alarms

## Transport

- ☐ Travelled harnessed in the back seat of a car
- ☐ Learnt to jump up into the back seat of a car
- ☐ Travelled in the cargo section of a station wagon.

## Re-homing efforts (LR42.6)

- ☐ I have re-homed this greyhound – No further action required
- ☐ I have contacted at least two (2) people about providing a suitable long-term home for this greyhound, but have been unsuccessful.

Details of the people contacted about re-homing are as follows:

Name:                      Date Contacted:                      Phone No:

1. ....
2. ....

- ☐ I have sought admission of this greyhound to the Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP).

I contacted Racing Services to make a booking on: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

The greyhound is booked in for Pre-Entry

Assessment on: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

- ☐ The greyhound attended Pre-Entry Assessment on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ but was unsuccessful.

I was unable to book the greyhound in for a Pre-Entry Assessment because (provide reason):

.....

.....

.....

## Racing to Retirement Checklist

- ☐ I have approached at least one other adoption, re-homing or rescue agency for assistance in re-homing this greyhound, but have been unsuccessful:

Name of re-homing agency:      Date Contacted:      Phone No:

1. ....  
2. ....

### Unsuccessful re-homing efforts – Notice of Intention to Euthanase

*\*If all of the re-homing efforts above have been attempted and have been unsuccessful and you intend to euthanase the greyhound (the last resort)*

- ☐ I have kept records of all re-homing efforts required.
- ☐ I have lodged a Notice of Intention to Euthanase (NOI) via FastTrack.  
I must wait at least 14 days before euthanasia of this greyhound.

14 days expires on: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### Go to Euthanasia Procedure

#### Behavioural Exemption from re-homing requirements - Checklist

- ☐ Wind down period has been completed
- ☐ I have written certification from a veterinarian, or other person approved by GRV, that certifies the greyhound is displaying significant behavioural characteristics that negatively impact on its suitability as a pet, including aggression towards humans or other animals.
- ☐ Proof of certification lodged with GRV on:  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

- ☐ NOI lodged on:  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Behavioural exemption accepted by GRV on:  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

- ☐ NOI Valid dates provided by GRV:

From: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

- ☐ NOI expires:  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### Go to Euthanasia Procedure

#### Medical or Legal Exemption Checklist

**No Wind Down period or NOI required**

- ☐ I have proof of medical condition obtained from a registered veterinarian certifying that the greyhound is suffering from an incurable condition or injury that causes significant pain or discomfort, or a marked reduction in quality of life, in the form prescribed by GRV.  
Please visit:  
[www.greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/new-local-rule-42-6](http://www.greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/new-local-rule-42-6)

OR

- ☐ I have proof of legal requirement to euthanise (i.e. notice from local council, court order etc.)

### Go to Euthanasia Procedure

#### Euthanasia procedure

- ☐ 14 days has passed since the lodgement of NOI.
- ☐ The NOI has not expired (i.e. it is not more than 42 days from lodgement)  
Date of euthanasia:  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Euthanasia certificate provided to GRV on:  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_