

# Greyhound retirement and end of life report

1 July – 30 September 2021



The Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission publishes quarterly reports of retirement, euthanasia and death notifications relating to greyhounds registered with the Commission.

Participants are required to notify the Commission within 14 days the of a greyhound's retirement from racing, and within two days from the date of the euthanasia or death of a greyhound.

This report includes any reports of euthanasia performed at a racetrack by GWIC veterinarians and any sudden deaths that occur at greyhound race meetings, which are also published in quarterly injury reports.

Changes to the structure of this quarterly report have been made to make data easier to find and improve the efficiency of the report's production.

## Retirement

Retired greyhounds that are owned by an industry participant remain registered with the Commission. Those that are transferred to the ownership of a non-industry participant are registered as pets on the NSW Pet Registry, and are no longer registered with the Commission.

**Table 1: Greyhound retirements reported by participants this quarter**

| Destination   | Number     | %    |
|---|------------|------|
| Retained by an industry participant (an owner or trainer)           | 84         | 23%  |
| Rehomed privately by owner or trainer to a non-participant as a pet | 65         | 18%  |
| Accepted by Greyhounds As Pets (GAP) <sup>1</sup>                   | 107        | 29%  |
| Accepted by another animal rescue or adoption agency <sup>2</sup>   | 108        | 30%  |
| Other   | 1          | 0.3% |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>365</b> |      |

<sup>1</sup> A not-for-profit initiative coordinated by Greyhound Racing NSW.

<sup>2</sup> Including the RSPCA, AWL or private animal rescue organisations.

## Euthanasia

Registered greyhounds may be euthanased only in accordance with the Commission's Greyhound Rehoming Policy, and a breach of this Policy may result in disciplinary action against a participant. Categories used in this report are described in the Policy, which is available at <https://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au/integrity/rulesandpolicies>.

**Table 2: Greyhound euthanasia reported by participants this quarter**

| Cause   | Number     | %   |
|---|------------|-----|
| Medical euthanasia <sup>3</sup> not at race meeting by a registered veterinarian due to:            |            |     |
| • injury  | 46         | 40% |
| • illness   | 46         | 40% |
| Medical euthanasia due to emergency <sup>4</sup>  | 0          | 0%  |
| Euthanasia at race meeting due to injury  | 12         | 11% |
| Euthanasia after rehoming attempts failed <sup>5</sup>  | 4          | 4%  |
| Euthanasia with statement that the greyhound was behaviourally unsuitable for rehoming <sup>6</sup> | 6          | 5%  |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>114</b> |     |

<sup>3</sup> The veterinarian must certify that the greyhound was suffering from an intractable injury or illness that causes significant pain or discomfort, or a marked reduction in quality of life, such that is inhumane or would otherwise compromise the welfare of the greyhound to delay euthanasia.

<sup>4</sup> 'Emergency' refers to 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 they were in accordance with the Commission's policies and the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*.

<sup>5</sup> The Greyhound Rehoming Policy requires participants to make at least two attempts to rehome any greyhound that they are unable to rehome privately before considering euthanasia.

<sup>6</sup> Euthanasia for behavioural reasons is not currently permitted under the Greyhound Rehoming Policy. These cases are investigated to determine whether a breach of the Policy has occurred.

## Death

**Table 3: Greyhound deaths reported by participants this quarter**

| Cause  | Number    | %   |
|--|-----------|-----|
| Deceased due to accident and/or injury                 | 11        | 24% |
| Deceased due to illness <sup>7</sup>                   | 18        | 39% |
| Deceased due to natural or unknown causes <sup>8</sup> | 17        | 37% |
| Sudden death at race meeting                           | 0         | 0%  |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>46</b> |     |

<sup>7</sup> Common illnesses associated with greyhounds include stomach torsions, twisted bowels and cardiac failure due to old age.

<sup>8</sup> Examples of accidental causes include paddock injuries, snake bites and fights.

## Trends

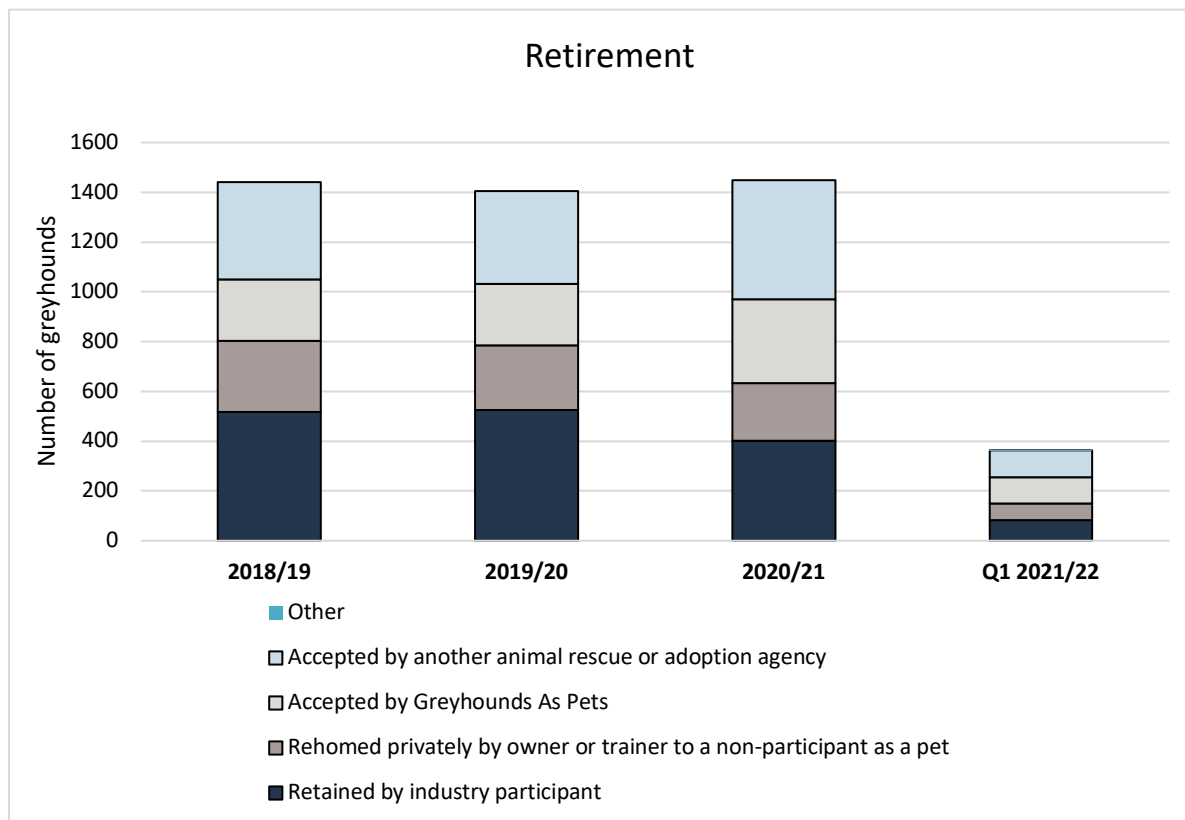
Note that financial year figures have been reconciled for the full year and include late notifications, and so may not match the sum of figures in previous quarterly reports.

The number of greyhounds for which the Commission received retirement notifications over the last three years has remained stable (Table 4, Figure1). The proportion of greyhounds retained by an industry participant appears to be declining, while the proportion rehomed by GAP and other rehoming organisations appears to be increasing.

**Table 4: Greyhound retirement trends**

| Destination   | FY 2018/19  | %   | FY 2019/20  | %   | FY 2020/21  | %   | Q1 2021/22 | %    |
|---|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|------------|------|
| Retained by an industry participant (an owner or trainer)           | 517         | 36% | 524         | 37% | 403         | 28% | 84         | 23%  |
| Rehomed privately by owner or trainer to a non-participant as a pet | 285         | 20% | 262         | 19% | 229         | 16% | 65         | 18%  |
| Accepted by Greyhounds As Pets                                      | 249         | 17% | 246         | 18% | 339         | 23% | 107        | 29%  |
| Accepted by another animal rescue or adoption agency                | 390         | 27% | 373         | 27% | 477         | 33% | 108        | 30%  |
| Other   |             |     |             |     |             |     | 1          | 0.3% |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1441</b> |     | <b>1405</b> |     | <b>1448</b> |     | <b>365</b> |      |

**Figure 1: Greyhound retirement trends**

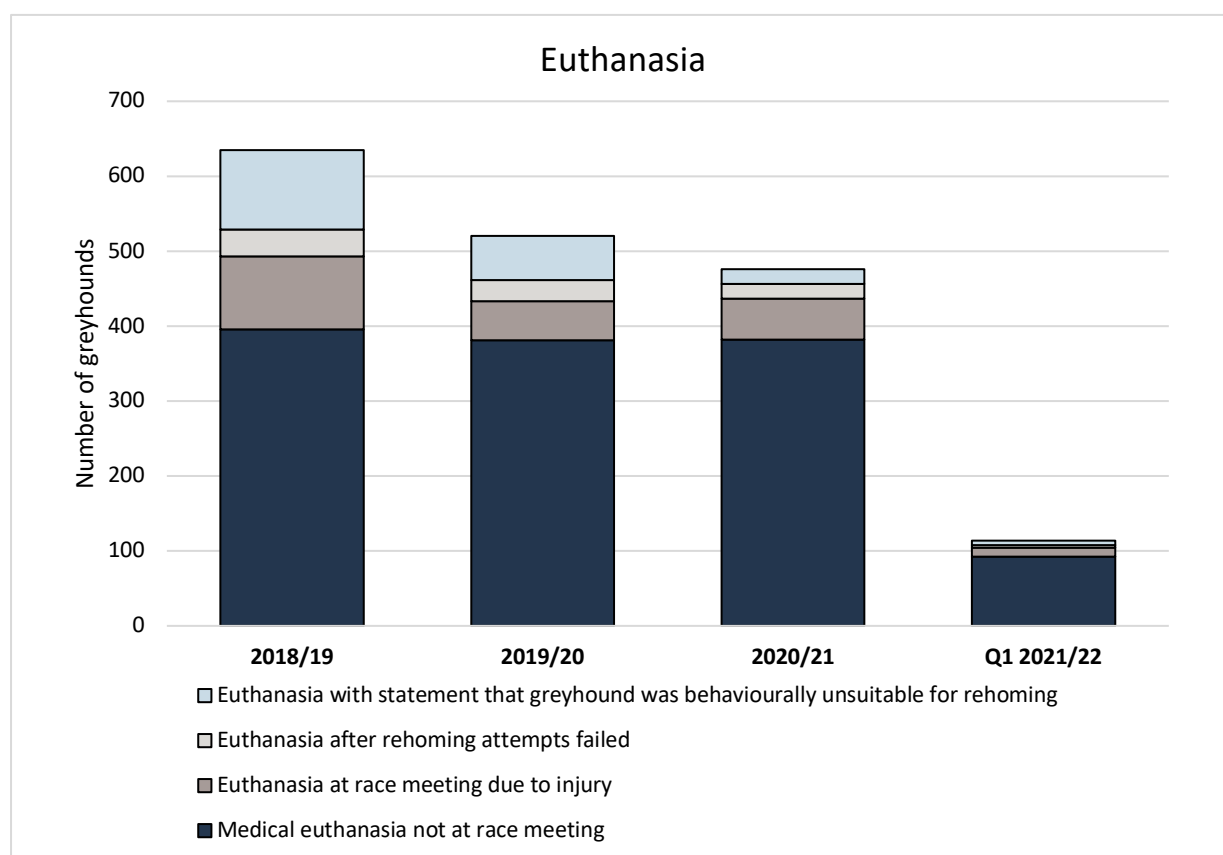


The number of greyhounds for which the Commission received euthanasia notifications in 2020/21 declined by 25% compared to the number in 2018/19 (Table 5, Figure 2). The decline has been proportionally largest in euthanasia with a statement that the greyhound is behaviorally unsuitable for rehoming, following the abolition of this category in December 2019.

**Table 5: Greyhound euthanasia trends**

| Cause  | FY 18/19   | %   | FY 19/20   | %   | FY 20/21   | %   | Q1 21/22   | %   |
|--|------------|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Medical euthanasia not at race meeting   | 396        | 62% | 381        | 73% | 382        | 80% | 92         | 81% |
| Euthanasia at race meeting due to injury   | 97         | 15% | 52         | 10% | 55         | 12% | 12         | 11% |
| Euthanasia after rehoming attempts failed  | 36         | 6%  | 28         | 5%  | 19         | 4%  | 4          | 4%  |
| Euthanasia with statement that greyhound was behaviourally unsuitable for rehoming | 106        | 17% | 59         | 11% | 20         | 4%  | 6          | 5%  |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>635</b> |     | <b>520</b> |     | <b>476</b> |     | <b>114</b> |     |

**Figure 2: Greyhound euthanasia trends**



The number of greyhounds for which the Commission received death notifications has declined since 2018/19 (Table 6, Figure 3).

The Commission is conducting further analysis to determine the reason for this decline, which may be related to a number of factors including the significant drop in breeding numbers that occurred in 2014-2015 resulting in a smaller cohort of older greyhounds (see GWIC Annual Report 2020/21).

**Table 6: Greyhound death notification trends**

| Cause                                     | FY 18/19   | %    | FY 19/20   | %   | FY 20/21   | %   | Q1 21/22  | %   |
|---|------------|------|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
| Deceased due to accident and/or injury    | 55         | 24%  | 73         | 37% | 57         | 33% | 11        | 24% |
| Deceased due to illness                   | 28         | 12%  | 55         | 31% | 45         | 26% | 18        | 39% |
| Deceased due to natural or unknown causes | 141        | 63%  | 60         | 32% | 66         | 38% | 17        | 37% |
| Sudden death at race meeting              | 1          | 0.4% | 2          | 1%  | 5          | 3%  | 0         | 0%  |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>225</b> |      | <b>190</b> |     | <b>173</b> |     | <b>46</b> |     |

**Figure 3: Greyhound death notification trends**

