

# Greyhound retirement and end of life report

1 October – 31 December 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 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 reports of any 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)	70	24%
Rehomed privately by owner or trainer to a non-participant as a pet	61	21%
Accepted by Greyhounds As Pets (GAP) <sup>1</sup>	58	20%
Accepted by another animal rescue or adoption agency <sup>2</sup>	106	36%
Other	1	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</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	33	34%
• illness	48	49%
Medical euthanasia due to emergency <sup>4</sup>	0	0%
Euthanasia at race meeting due to injury	13	13%
Euthanasia after rehoming attempts failed <sup>5</sup>	0	0%
Euthanasia after with statement that the greyhound was behaviourally unsuitable for rehoming <sup>6</sup>	3	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</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> The circumstances surrounding any emergency euthanasia are examined by the Commission to ensure they are 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> Greyhound Euthanasia for behavioural reasons is not currently permitted under the Greyhound Rehoming Policy. These cases are investigated to determine if 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 <sup>7</sup>	25	36%
Deceased due to illness <sup>8</sup>	21	30%
Deceased due to natural or unknown causes	22	31%
Sudden death at race meeting	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	

<sup>7</sup> Examples of accidental causes include paddock injuries, snake bites and fights.

<sup>8</sup> Common illnesses associated with greyhounds include stomach torsions, twisted bowels and cardiac failure due to old age.

## Trends

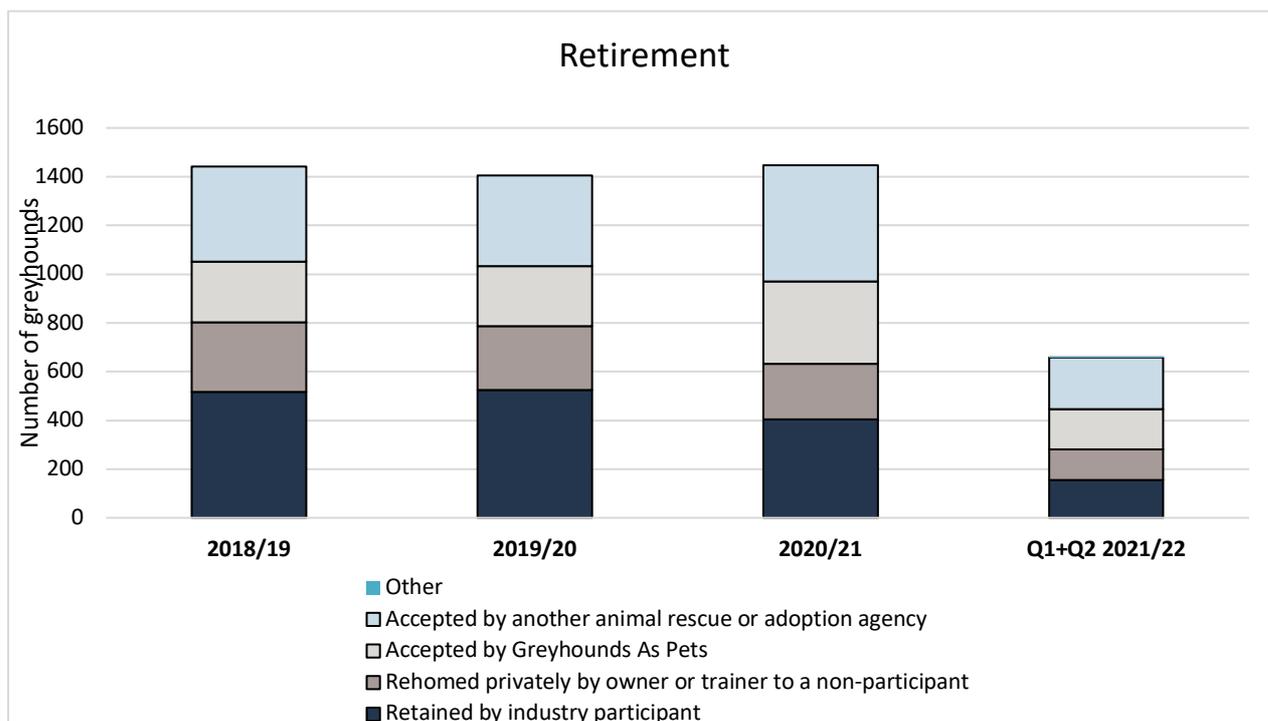
Note that financial year figures have been reconciled for the full year and include late notifications, and so may not match the sum of figures in previous quarterly reports.

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. Retirements in the first two quarters of 2021/22 show a similar pattern to retirements in 2020/21.

**Table 4: Greyhound retirement trends**

Destination	FY 2018/19	%	FY 2019/20	%	FY 2020/21	%	Q1 & Q2 2021/22	%
Retained by an industry participant (an owner or trainer)	517	36%	524	37%	403	28%	154	23%
Rehomed privately by owner or trainer to a non-participant as a pet	285	20%	262	19%	229	16%	126	19%
Accepted by Greyhounds as Pets (GAP)	249	17%	246	18%	339	23%	165	25%
Accepted by another animal rescue or adoption agency	390	27%	373	27%	477	33%	214	32%
Other							2	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1441</b>		<b>1405</b>		<b>1448</b>		<b>661</b>	

**Figure 1: Greyhound retirement trends**



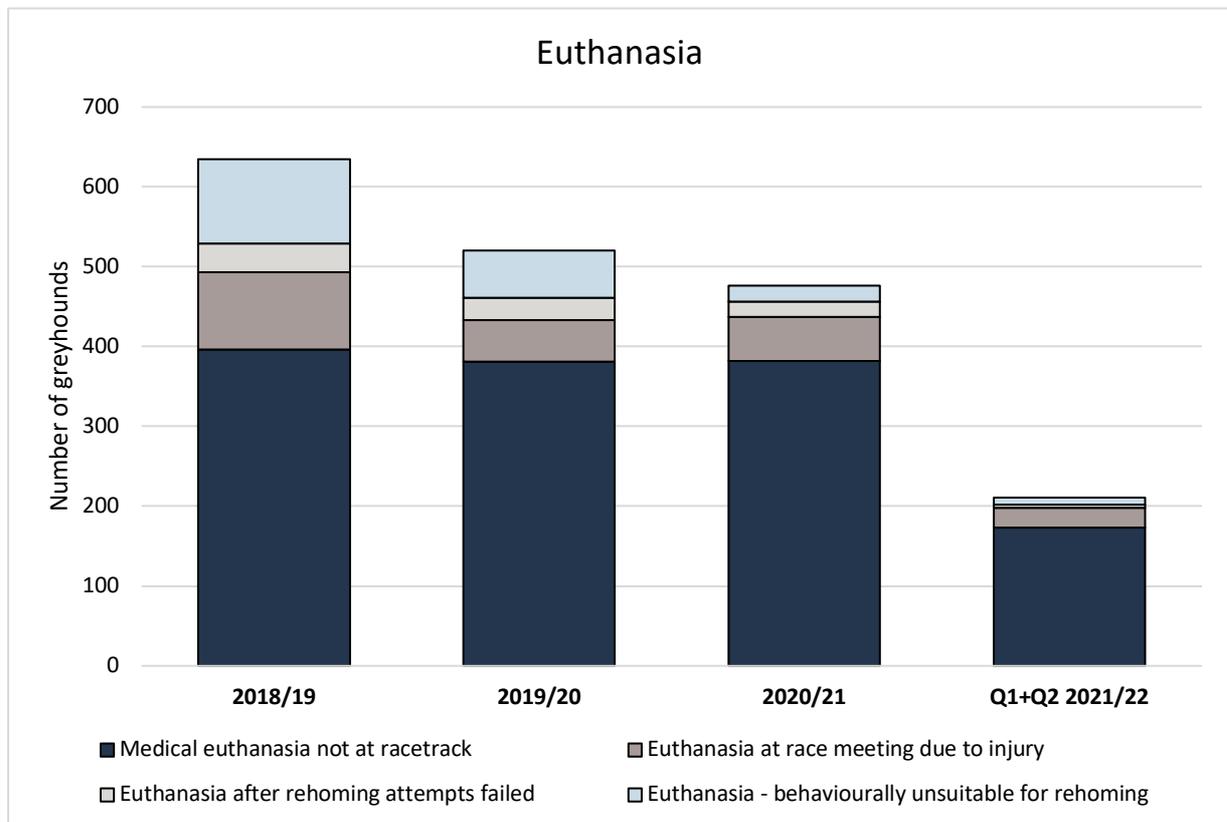
The number of greyhounds for which the Commission received euthanasia notifications in 2020/21 declined by 25% compared to the number in 2018/19 (Table 5, Figure 2). The decline has been proportionally largest in euthanasia where a statement is made that the greyhound is behaviorally unsuitable for rehoming,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

Causes of euthanasia in the first two quarters of 2021/22 show a similar pattern to those reported in 2020/21.

**Table 5: Greyhound euthanasia trends**

Cause	FY 18/19	%	FY 19/20	%	FY 20/21	%	Q1 & Q2 21/22	%
Medical euthanasia not at race meeting	396	62%	381	73%	382	80%	173	82%
Euthanasia at race meeting due to injury	97	15%	52	10%	55	12%	25	12%
Euthanasia after rehoming attempts failed	36	6%	28	5%	19	4%	4	2%
Euthanasia with statement that greyhound was behaviourally unsuitable for rehoming.	106	17%	59	11%	20	4%	9	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>635</b>		<b>520</b>		<b>476</b>		<b>211</b>	

**Figure 2: Greyhound euthanasia trends**



The Commission received fewer death notifications between 2018/19 and 2020/21 (Table 6, Figure 6). This may be related to a number of factors including the drop in breeding numbers that occurred in 2014-2015, resulting in a smaller cohort of older greyhounds.

The number of death notifications received in Q1 and Q2 2021/22 is proportionally larger than would be expected if this trend was to continue; however, this may be a reflection of improved awareness among participants of the requirement to notify the Commission of greyhound deaths.

**Table 6: Greyhound death notification trends**

Cause	FY 18/19	%	FY 19/20	%	FY 20/21	%	Q1 & Q2 21/22	%
Deceased due to accident and/or injury	55	24%	73	37%	57	33%	36	31%
Deceased due to illness	28	12%	55	31%	45	26%	39	34%
Deceased due to natural or unknown causes	141	63%	60	32%	66	38%	39	34%
Sudden death at race meeting	1	0.4%	2	1%	5	3%	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>		<b>190</b>		<b>173</b>		<b>116</b>	

**Figure 3: Greyhound death notification trends**

