



GREYHOUNDS WA - GREYHOUND ADOPTION PROGRAM

Greyhounds As Pets
Foster Carer Information Pack



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Other Greyhound Adoption Programs

SA: www.gapsa.org.au

VIC: gap.grv.org.au

NSW: www.gapnsw.com.au

www.gapnsw.org.au

QLD: www.greyhoundspets.org.au

TAS: www.gaptas.org.au

NZ: greyhoundsaspets.org.nz

Greyhounds As Pets

The retired racing greyhound makes a great pet. Contrary to popular belief, these dogs are not highly-strung or aggressive, but are generally very calm and docile dogs. Greyhounds have little problem fitting into a variety of situations and delight in being close to their human companions. Owners often comment on their “second shadow”. Greyhounds are most content sitting on the couch beside you with their long, elegant head nestled snugly in your lap. If this is what you are looking for in a pet, a greyhound may be the dog for you!

Greyhounds As Pets (GAP) is the only officially sanctioned greyhound adoption program in WA. It is an initiative of Greyhounds WA and RWWA dedicated to finding homes for greyhounds no longer suitable for racing. While many greyhounds become available for adoption each year, misconceptions about the breed deter people from owning them as pets. As they have a passion for the chase, people mistakenly assume that greyhounds are aggressive.

Each greyhound that enters GAP is cared for by a foster carer for a period of 4 - 6 weeks in order to expose them to as many different experiences (eg. cats, children, small animals etc) as possible.

All of our greyhounds are temperament tested, and although each adoption is undertaken with the expectation that the dog will remain with its new family for life, we will always take the dog back if your situation changes at any time.

GAP greyhounds are desexed, have their teeth cleaned, vaccinated and microchipped; an adoption fee exists only to recover some of these costs. More importantly, these dogs can give as much, if not more, affection than they receive. It is our hope that GAP can improve the image of these beautiful hounds and find loving homes that will bring happiness to both owners and dogs.

Whether you are thinking about the possibility of adopting a retired racing greyhound or have made the decision to offer a home to one, we have compiled this information to help you and your family understand some of the experiences you may have owning a greyhound. Also included is information regarding health care, specific breed facts, and hints which will make the transition of your new dog into the family home easier for everyone.





Common Questions

Why do greyhounds make good pets?

Greyhounds are quiet, well mannered, and very easy to live with. They are friendly, lazy, calm, affectionate, clean, loving, trusting, good-natured and very social. They do however, have to learn manners in a home environment and that's where foster carers come in!

Do retired racing greyhounds adjust quickly to life as a pet?

Yes. Greyhounds are fostered by GAP for around four to six weeks to expose them to as many new experiences as possible. Evaluation of the greyhound as a companion animal is an important part of helping GAP to ensure that the right dog goes to the right home.

Foster carers introduce their greyhound to new things like vacuum cleaners, glass doors, stairs etc. Remember that life in a kennel is a relatively sheltered existence and your home will offer many new experiences for most greyhounds. Most greyhounds have never really learned to play in the same way other dogs do as their lives have been all business.

Are the greyhounds already toilet trained when they come to my home?

Most greyhounds do not come toilet trained. However, they are generally very clean dogs. Living in a kennel environment, most dogs do not like to soil their sleeping quarters, and will wait until turned out to relieve themselves. When first brought into the home, the greyhound should be treated in a similar manner to a puppy being housebroken - taking the dog outside every couple of hours for the first day or so, especially after meals, play and long naps.

It is important over the first few days to watch the greyhound closely when it is inside your house, so that you may correct it immediately if it tries to go to the toilet. When catching the dog in the act, say a firm NO and immediately take the dog outside. When it then continues to go to the toilet outside, praise the dog profusely. Do not chastise the dog if it has an accident inside but you are not there to catch it in time. Correcting the dog after the event will only serve to confuse and frighten the dog - corrections must be made at the time of the discretion, and not afterwards.

Are greyhounds good with children?

Although not all foster homes will have children, it is necessary to ascertain a dog's reaction to young children. This could be done to some degree by visiting a local park or sports field, especially on weekends. Otherwise, your foster dog can be moved to another foster home in order to interact with children. Unlike adults, children tend to move rapidly, not always in a coordinated manner, and may shriek out in high-pitched tones. To a young excitable greyhound, this may be an incentive to chase. Such a desire may be exacerbated when rollerblades, skateboards or bicycles are added to the picture. The majority of greyhounds are excellent with children in the home environment, preferring to walk away if harassed by a persistent child, but close supervision is essential as with any breed.

Are greyhounds good with other dogs?

GAP aims to ensure that all of our greyhounds are sociable with other dogs. They generally get along well with other dogs, although they may not play with them. Common sense should be exercised during the introductory period and supervised feeding is ALWAYS recommended in a multi-pet household. Throughout the foster period, your foster greyhound must be introduced to other dogs. In order to experience different living arrangements ie living alone or with other dogs, foster dogs will be moved between foster homes accordingly.

Do greyhounds have to be muzzled in public?

In 2013 the Dog Act was amended to include a special provision for greyhounds. Greyhounds who successfully complete a prescribed training programme are permitted to be muzzle free in public.

Foster greyhounds are still in the process of completing this programme; therefore they are still required to wear a muzzle. As the person responsible for the dog you can be fined if they are not wearing one. All foster carers **MUST** ensure their greyhound is muzzled in public. Please go to our website for more information.

Are greyhounds good with other animals?

Like all breeds, it depends on the individual dog. While some greyhounds are not suitable for homes with small animals such as rabbits and cats, a lot are. At GAP we test our dogs to ensure that a correct match between greyhound and adopter is achieved. It should be remembered that greyhounds have been bred for centuries to chase and the prey drive in some individuals means they can never be fully trusted with small animals. Many, however, will learn to accept other pets if introduced slowly and carefully, always with strict supervision. Any introductions should always be carried out on lead, and with the greyhound properly muzzled, until the dog's reactions can be assessed. Risks should never be taken with the safety of your own pets.

Are greyhounds aggressive?

Two things a greyhound (or any other dog) may feel possessive about are food and its sleeping quarters. During the fostering period, the dog should learn to accept its food and food bowl being handled in a non-threatening manner. Any foster dog should be fed separately from other pets, especially when first introduced. After the first three or four days, when the dog should be learning to trust the foster carer, food can be added to the bowl gradually by hand as the dog is eating. Eventually, by the end of the foster period, the dog should accept the food bowl being taken away and, ideally, food or other objects being taken from its mouth. Needless to say, care should be taken in these circumstances and an assessment of the dog's temperament made before proceeding. Sleep-space aggression is reported in some greyhounds, usually in response to being woken or disturbed suddenly during a nap. Some greyhounds do sleep with their eyes open, so it is important to ensure that the dog is awake before touching and surprising it. As they are generally housed individually in racing kennels, they are not used to other dogs or children touching them or tripping over them in their sleep.

What happens if things don't work out when I take the foster dog home?

If your foster dog doesn't fit in with your household, just let the GAP staff know and we'll make arrangements to move the dog. This may require you to drive the dog to another foster carer or to kennels; however, we will act as quickly as we can to ensure the safety of the greyhound, your pets, and your family.

This is most likely to occur in foster homes that have cats, where a greyhound doesn't settle well around the cats. We ask that you exercise common sense until we can relocate the dog and keep the greyhound separate from your cats.

Do I have to take the greyhound to the vet?

All GAP greyhounds are vetted prior to being adopted. They receive the following services:

- Vaccination
- Sterilization
- Microchipping
- Teeth cleaning if required.

It is the role of the foster carer to take the dog to the vet, and care for them post operatively. The cost of the vetting is covered by GAP, and no foster carer is expected to pay vet fees for their foster dog.

GAP has a network of vet clinics that offer support and we will book the greyhound into the closest surgery to you. In the case of an emergency please do not hesitate to call GAP and seek veterinary advice from your closest vet clinic.



Does it cost anything to be a foster carer?

GAP provides dry dog food, bedding, a coat, collar, lead and muzzle and ongoing support and training. Foster carers just need to supply love, patience, water, a food bowl and a bit of petrol.

GAP also provides ongoing training for foster carers, an opportunity to attend Pupi training and online networking with other foster carers.

What if I fall in love with my foster dog and decide to keep it?

Don't worry, this is a common occurrence! Often foster carers become very attached to their foster dog and wish to keep him. GAP is more than happy to accommodate this as long as a potential adoptive family has not already met the dog and agreed to adopt it. If a foster home wishes to keep a dog, a discounted foster fee will apply for the adoption.

How do I become a foster carer?

Just call or email GAP – we'll get a foster dog into your home as soon as we can!

What does GAP provide for its foster carers?

Every foster carer will receive dry dog food and bedding for their greyhounds plus a coat for winter. Every greyhound comes with its own collar, lead and muzzle and Adoption pack.

The Adoption pack contains:

- A Foster Carer Evaluation Summary (for the foster carer to report on the dogs progress)
- An Adoption handbook (to answer all the questions of dog ownership)
- Certificate of Sterilization, Vaccination card and microchip papers (that you as the foster carer will collect from the vet when you pick the dog up)
- Three month supply of Bayer Advocate flea and worming treatment
- Tickets for two to visit Greyhounds WA
- A Greyhounds as Pets Sticker
- A voucher for a one on one behavioural session with Dr Garth Jennens should it be required
- A voucher for a free four week PUPi training session
- Adoption Agreement and Road Test Contracts
- Change of Microchip Details form

In addition, GAP provide foster carers with ongoing support via phone, email and face to face, and all foster carers are invited to join our online forum to network with other foster carers.

GAP offers a series of training sessions held approximately bi-monthly for all active foster carers including:

- A visit to a greyhound trainer's property
- Separation Anxiety theory session with Dr Garth Jennens
- Dog Handling and Anxiety practical session with Dr Garth Jennens
- Separation and Loss (for people!) with Dr Pauline Arnold
- Animal First Aid
- Pet Nutrition with food sponsor representatives



What does GAP expect of its foster carers?

Love and Patience – to put up with the soiling accidents, the sleepless nights and the little mistakes the dog's make while they "learn the ropes"! All they really want is a bit of love!

Social Events – GAP volunteers run playgroups almost every weekend and we also attend regular events such as Million Paws Walk. We generally ask our foster carers to attend so that people can meet the foster dogs. Attendance is not compulsory, however, if we require the dog we will try to make arrangements to collect it from you.

Socialisation – GAP asks that all foster dogs receive socialisation with other dogs in foster care. PUPi training is provided free of charge for all foster carers and provides opportunities for all dogs to receive socialisation. If you are unable to provide socialisation for your foster dog, GAP can easily arrange moving them to a new foster home where they can receive additional socialisation.

Flexibility – GAP asks foster carers to be flexible and we do our best to return the favour. This means we may ask you to take the dog somewhere or switch dogs with short notice. We know life sometimes gets in the way of a good plan, and we do our best to work with every foster family to get the best outcome for the dogs.

Driving – This might include trips to our office to collect your foster dog, to the vet for surgery, to a prearranged location for the adoption of your dog, or to another foster carer's house to switch foster dogs.

Vet Care – GAP has a network of vet clinics that allow us to provide greyhounds to people at the lowest possible cost. Therefore we ask foster carers to take dogs to our preferred clinics if the dog requires veterinary attention. However, if the dog is in need of urgent veterinary attention, please take them to your nearest vet clinic and notify GAP immediately.

Exhibitions and Adoption Days – GAP often attend large scale exhibits such as the Perth Royal Show to educate the public on the gentle nature of our breed and to encourage people to consider adopting a greyhound. We often ask our foster carers to attend these events. The GAP has grown rapidly over the last few years and now we try to organise mass adoption days where a number of foster families and dogs, plus prospective forever families are invited to come along to a designated venue for a meet and greet.

Feedback – this is the most important aspect of fostering as it is your information that allows us to best place the greyhounds in the most suitable homes. We ask that you provide us updates on the dogs behaviour such as what type of home it will be suitable for, and what type of experiences it may still require before being ready for a forever home.



Training Tips for Foster Carers

Each foster carer is asked to begin teaching their foster dog the following commands: Heel, Stay, Stand.

Please continue to use these commands during the greyhounds stay with you. This will reduce confusion for the foster dogs caused by each carer using different commands.

Please be firm with your foster dog. By being soft, and allowing undesirable behaviour to continue, you are extending the fostering process, confusing the dog, and increasing the likelihood that the dog may be returned due to unacceptable behavioural traits. By being patient, fair and firm, you are giving the dog the best chance to understand the rules they need to know to make everyone happy, and you are helping them be a well-mannered dog that is a pleasure to be around. As mentioned earlier, racing greyhounds are used to a fairly regimented life with few options or choices to make in its day to day activities.

When a greyhound is suddenly given the freedom of an entire house, and has some choice in how it spends its time, it may revert to a (temporary) second puppyhood. It is important that some basic ground rules are established for the dog early in the foster period and that all members of the family abide by them. Restricting the dog to certain rooms in the house, at least initially, may make supervision easier. This may be achieved by simply keeping doors closed or by using baby gates or other barriers.

Most greyhounds will discover soft human beds or lounge chairs within the first few days (or hours) after arrival. Although greyhounds are the ultimate “couch potatoes”, taking lounging almost to an art form, it must be remembered that their future adoptive home may not condone such practices. Therefore foster dogs must be discouraged from reclining on the furniture.

A soft bed of their own, located in a quiet area, should be provided, and the dog should be encouraged to retreat there with the command “on your mat”. The bed should be positioned so that the dog can take in most of the household activities without getting in the way. You may wish to move the dog’s bed to just inside your bedroom or close by at night, so that the dog feels secure by your presence, and so that

you can supervise the dog’s night time activities.

Another vice of some greyhounds newly introduced to the home is pinching food left on kitchen benches or tables (also known as “counter surfing”). Because greyhounds are so tall, reaching such places is quite easy. The obvious solution is not to leave anything tempting lying within reach. Keeping one or more squirt bottles filled with water and ready to use can be effective in stopping such practices.

Certain concessions need to be made for a foster greyhound as they are encountering many new experiences over a relatively short period of time. However, some will need to be given firm guidelines as to acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour within the home, and when out in public. Most greyhounds are quite sensitive creatures and gentle disciplinary measures such as a stern, disapproving tone of voice or a quick spray with the squirt bottle are usually sufficient to get the message across.



People Understanding Puppy Interaction (PUPi) provides a free four week dog training course for all foster greyhounds at 23 locations across Perth. Training is carried out in enclosed areas to enable dogs to socialise with each other off lead (at the discretion of the trainer). PUPi uses only humane, positive training methods with the minimal use of treats, to attain maximum voice control both on and off the lead.

PUPi has been developed by qualified professionals to provide a flexible and practical approach to dog training and behaviour. Currently operating in Perth, Western Australia PUPi aims to provide accurate and appropriate advice to assist pet owners to better integrate their pet into the home.

PUPi is operated, and supported by a qualified and experienced team of behaviour, training and management consultants, who provide a range of pet services in Western Australia. It also assists in linking you to other pet services not provided by PUPi.

For the treatment of serious and complex behaviour problems PUPi only recommends the use of fully qualified animal behaviourists and uses only experienced veterinary nurses as instructors.



Raced V Unraced - Which Makes A Better Pet?

We often have people commenting on how pleased they are when they hear that a particular greyhound hasn't raced, as they believe this means the dog will be a better pet. However, this is often far from the truth!

Words such as "institutionalised", "scarred by racing", "traumatised", "miserable", and comments such as "they must be mistreated/abused/starved by the trainers", "they hate racing" "they're locked in those cages" and "because they've raced they're going to attack other animals" are all quite common observations that people make. Fortunately they're not at all correct.

A racing greyhound is an athlete and as such, they need to receive the best care, nutrition and environment to be successful. You wouldn't expect an Olympic athlete to run fast if they're mistreated would you? Well, a racing greyhound is no different. In fact, many racing dogs receive far better care and attention than their domestic pet canine counterparts.

After having nearly 5000 greyhounds go through GAP around Australia, we can confidently say that performed race dogs are generally FAR easier to handle and integrate into pet life than unraced dogs. Ask any long term foster carer and they'll tell you that the old race campaigners cope much better with the transition to pet life than inexperienced young dogs. Performed race dogs are generally better on lead, quicker to house train, cope much better with cars, traffic, vets, noises etc. Because a seasoned race dog is used to being handled a lot more, travelled more, treated more etc, they don't find the new experiences in a pet home so daunting.

Why is this you may ask? Think of race training as being like the army. Dogs in a racing kennel usually follow a set daily routine. They are provided with discipline and rules to follow to ensure that they are well behaved and easy to manage in the kennels. They are taught to walk

on lead and travel in cars. They're used to being poked and prodded by vets. They're used to being given tablets. The dogs know what is expected of them because their trainers provide clear leadership and boundaries.

Unraced, younger dogs on the other hand often don't have the boot camp type of preparation. They can be unruly, take longer to settle into a home, longer to housetrain and often find the new experiences in pet life to be quite daunting. Similarly, people who take greyhound puppies and then don't provide them with some obedience and socialisation training can often discover they have a problem dog on their hands once the dogs reach the adolescent stage.

So next time you think it's a disadvantage taking a performed racing dog as a pet, think again!



Foster Carer Application

Thank you for your expression of interest in fostering a retired greyhound. We request that you complete the following questionnaire to provide us with more information.

***A current drivers license is required to foster for GAP.*

Do you have other dogs?

Yes No

Do you have any of the following animals:

Cats Poultry Livestock

Do you have children?

Yes No Ages:

Name

Address

Telephone

Email

Please send this form to:
Greyhounds As Pets
PO Box 6
Cannington WA 6987

We will be in touch with you soon.

Are You Ready To Foster?

When you foster a greyhound you are making a commitment to care for that dog for the period of time that it resides at your home. This means to accept the new pet into your life, including in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, and with all its bad manners and naivety about domestic life. Please consider a few things before you foster.

If you are thinking of fostering a retired racer you must realize that you are considering a dog that has had nothing asked of it except to run fast. GAP fosters the greyhounds to help prepare them for life in a domestic environment.

You housebreak, introduce the dog to children and small animals, teach the dog to navigate stairs and tiles and generally assist the dog with its adjustment into normal household life.

Foster carers are encouraged to take their dogs to a basic canine obedience class if they wish. Doing so helps owner-dog communication, builds confidence in both the foster carer and the foster dogs, and encourages socialisation.

Behavioural problems are often cited as reasons for returning the dog to GAP. In most cases simple training techniques can be employed to alter most troublesome behaviours. GAP trains foster carers in how to build each dogs confidence and asks for feedback about the greyhound's behaviour to ensure we match the dogs to the right home.

Living with a dog can be difficult from time to time. A dog is capable of doing things, usually the wrong things, when you least expect it. A growl, snap or bite can occur with any dog and one incident should not be grounds for divorce. In many situations, there can be extenuating circumstances that provoked the dog to react the way it did; it does not mean the dog is aggressive.

We ask for your feedback about your greyhound's reaction to different circumstances so we can appropriately home the greyhound, or return it to its trainer if its not considered suitable to be adopted as a companion animal.

An occasional housebreaking incident should be expected. Like you, your dog's body is subject to fluctuations that may mean an isolated incident of house soiling.

Some digging and crying may also be experienced while the dog adjusts.

It's going to take some time for your dog to learn your routine. This will not occur overnight but please consider the fact that the greyhound will ultimately settle into someone's else's routine. It doesn't need to be settled in your routine in order to be a successful pet.

Vet visits are something else to keep in mind. Besides the initial vetting appointment, your foster dog may experience sickness and injury which can require a visit to your Emergency Vet Clinic. Are you going to be able to get your dog to a vet if he requires medical attention?

Long term plans need to be examined – fostering may be a realistic alternative to owning your own dog. Foster dogs can be moved easily if your circumstances change, and you can foster as little or as much as you like. You get to experience many different personalities and also play a vital role in finding many greyhounds great homes.

But with fostering comes being able to give up the dog when a forever family is ready. This can be very emotional for your whole family. Some people cope better with this process than others. GAP assists foster carers through this process and also offers a foster carer training session with a psychologist to help foster families with coping mechanisms.

Please think about what you've just read. You are now ready to take the first step in making the decision on fostering a greyhound.



Testimonials

Fostering Is So Rewarding

My affection for greyhounds began after losing my gorgeous Sam, a blue roan spaniel. After losing Sam I had virtually decided not to get another dog – famous last words. After seeing Burkes Backyard on television I became obsessed in finding out more about these amazing but large hounds.

I met Kerry and Christine at the Canning Show and just couldn't stay away from the GAP display with all the sleepy hounds just lounging around. In the beginning Kerry found me the lovely Opal to adopt. This hound was stunning but very sensitive and it was a huge learning experience for me to understand that greyhounds have delicate feelings and really don't appreciate being growled at or treated with anything but a soft voice.

It wasn't too long before Opal let me know that having 2 cats for friends was all very well but she would really like some greyhound company – hence the beginning of an extended career in fostering. I have to say that taking in these magnificent hounds to share our lives has been a life changing experience. The wonderful thing is that they are all so different in personality. The number of different characters has given me so much joy & loads of laughter as I've tried to watch TV after a hard day at work while these little comedians go through all sorts of funny things to amuse themselves and me.

An unexpected change came to my fostering when Opal decided she wanted to keep Sophie (now Ruby) as her forever friend. Her decision was immediate and who was I to question her judgment. After all she had had 3 years experience in training hounds to love family life and I couldn't deny she deserved her retirement.

It has been an absolute privilege to have the opportunity to help mould these lovely greyhounds into great family pets and I can certainly recommend the experience to everyone who has a love for dogs.

Bev, Opal & Ruby



Commitment Phobia

If you are someone like me, who has a chronic fear of commitment and a serious inability to make decisions, then fostering greyhounds could be for you! It provides the joy of having a friendly cuddly animal around the house without the usual obligations - no vet bills, no food bills, free boarding when you go away and the freedom to have a dog-free break whenever you like!

We do not have any pets of our own so we tend to think of our foster dogs as our own pets while they are with us. The first dog that we fostered was Millie and we loved her! We were so excited taking her for excursions to the beach and to meet her extended foster family and friends. After a couple of weeks, a beautiful family came to meet her and it was a match made in heaven. Millie now has a wonderful life and we have the satisfaction of knowing we have helped her.

We've met some hilarious characters, like Goldie the kleptomaniac who decided her bed would be a lot more comfy with our pillows on it, and that the doona really needed to be taken out to the backyard for some reason! It's been fantastic to see each of these dogs find a new home. Often we are able to meet the adoptive families and it makes it easier to say goodbye when we can see what a great home they will be going to.

For us, the beauty of fostering is the flexibility it provides compared to having our own full time pet – we are able to drop the dogs off for a weekend if we go away, or can have a break for a few weeks. The GAP coordinators are fantastic at accommodating us and are always there for support when needed. But, the best thing is that there is always a wonderful new dog with it's own personality to meet and share our lives with for a short time.

Belinda & Callan



GREYHOUNDS AS PETS

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