



# GAP Strategy

**2020**  
& BEYOND

*Invest – Innovate – Differentiate*

July 2016



tasracing

## *From the Chairman Dean Cooper*



## A strategic plan for the future of Tasmania's Greyhound Adoption Program

The Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) is an important strategic initiative for Tasracing and the greyhound racing industry.

Community perceptions of greyhound racing have been impacted by recent and ongoing inquiries, and we must work together to maintain our social licence to operate. Greyhound welfare is therefore a key priority and focus.

GAP has proven to be a successful welfare initiative, and one that has industry and community support. In order to further enhance greyhound welfare we must expand and introduce changes to facilitate increased re-homing efforts and insist on responsible ownership.

The GAP Strategy has been developed in consultation with our stakeholders and the industry at large. I thank you for your input and support. Your passion and commitment is evident.

I encourage all participants to embrace the new GAP initiatives, as we continue to work together to help enhance greyhound welfare outcomes in Tasmania.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dean Cooper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

*Dean Cooper  
Chairman*

# INTRODUCTION

Tasracing wants to see an industry where every greyhound has every opportunity to enjoy a fulfilling life after racing.

GAP has evolved since Tasracing took ownership in September 2010, but has reached a point where a new strategic direction is required to address the key issues to increase the number of dogs adopted and to focus ownership and responsibility on greyhound owners.

**This plan sets out a number of new strategies and initiatives in order to achieve this. They include:**

- Construction of a dedicated greyhound adoption centre.
- An interim “meet and greet” facility, while the adoption centre is built.
- Development of an expanded marketing campaign in support of our new strategies and initiatives.
- The introduction of new pre-testing requirements for entry into GAP.
- Review and improve arrangements for foster carers.
- Being part of a national GAP master brand strategy.
- Lobbying government for legislative change in respect of muzzle laws.



## CURRENT SITUATION

The number of adoptions facilitated by GAP each year is increasing. Eighty five greyhounds were adopted last year, compared with 63 in 2014.

GAP operates from a private property at Mangalore.

Tasracing funds GAP, employing a state-wide coordinator and an assistant. An important contribution is made by a number of dedicated volunteers and foster carers.

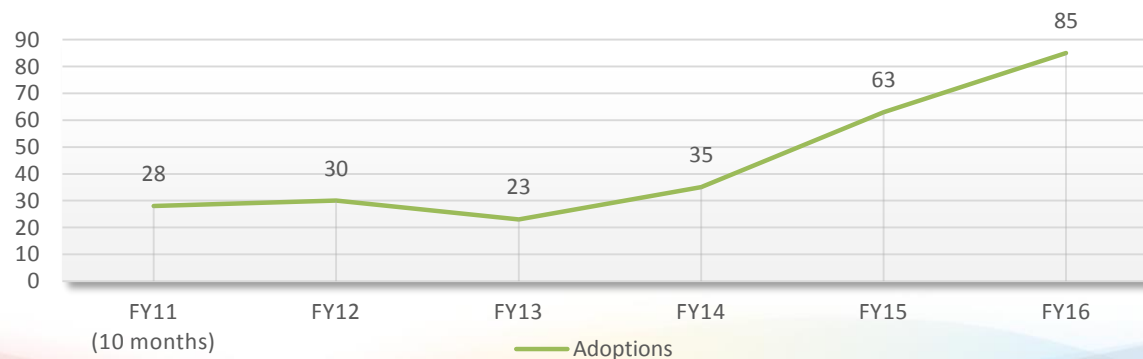
To demonstrate its commitment to greyhound welfare, Tasracing has increased funding to GAP over the past two years, from an annual spend of \$118,000 in 2014/15 to \$264,000 in 2015/16.

The current average waiting time to get a greyhound into the GAP is 8 to 12 weeks.

The GAP coordinator currently arranges meetings with prospective adopters away from her premises once the dogs have had four to six weeks in foster care.

GAP operates a robust testing regime. This includes a mandatory initial assessment/temperament test to determine the dog's nature and whether it is suitable for the program (which is in accordance with national GAP standards) and mandatory veterinary work (including de-sexing and vaccinations)

### GAP ADOPTIONS





# INDUSTRY CONSULTATION

In November 2015, Tasracing provided the paper *Strategy Development of the Greyhound Adoption Program* to the Greyhound Reference Group (GRG) members and the industry for feedback.

In March 2016, Tasracing provided the *GAP development paper* to the GRG which included industry feedback. The paper addressed the future direction of GAP and key strategies. Further feedback from GRG members was requested.

## Key issues

Tasracing and the industry have identified the following key issues:

1. GAP is reaching capacity. The program lacks scalability in its current form due to the number of available kennels and the number of foster carers.
2. There is a lack of an appropriate meeting point and ability to present all available greyhounds for prospective adopters is impacting demand and adoption rates.
3. Current waiting periods (eight to 12 weeks) are long and have been a criticism of the program. The bottlenecks are caused by a low number of foster carers and the current kennel capacity.
4. Long waiting periods can cause owners to look at alternative adoption agencies where testing and adoption practices are not aligned with the strict GAP national protocols.
5. Current community perceptions on greyhounds as pets can be improved to enhance the breed's reputation as a pet option.
6. Greyhound owners must be encouraged to take life-long responsibility for their dogs, whether or not they make it to the track or when they retire from racing.



## THE WAY FORWARD

### A new purpose built Greyhound Adoption Centre



The Tasracing Board has approved the construction of a dedicated, purpose-built Greyhound Adoption Centre.

Construction and completion will take place in 2016/17 at a venue to be determined.

The centre will be built on land of ideally two to four hectares, enabling up to 40 dogs to be kennelled at any one time while also allowing room for growth.

It will also include appropriate administration and caretaker's facilities.

To improve interaction for prospective foster carers and adopters, the centre will also feature a meet and greet area.

The proposed kennel configuration will be:

- Block 1 (20 kennels): 20 greyhounds ready to adopt and available for public interaction/viewing.
- Block 2 (20 kennels): 20 greyhounds that have passed the pre-testing and are ready for fostering, assessment or veterinary care.

## INTERIM MEET AND GREET FACILITY



Tasracing recognises the need to provide a meet and great facility while the greyhound adoption centre is constructed.

Eight removable day kennels will be erected at Elwick within four on-course stalls in the covered western side of the stalls complex.

The Conquering Bar and adjacent amenities will be opened when prospective foster careers and adopters are on site.

The pre-parade area closest to the Conquering Bar will have gates fitted to both ends of the walkways to form a safe area for the dogs to be enclosed. This will allow the greyhounds to be unleashed and interact with the prospective foster careers and adopters and their pets.

The facility can be used on any day of the week with hours scheduled around club events, horse racing events and trials.



## INCREASED INVESTMENT IN PROMOTING GREYHOUNDS AS PETS



**Want to help a retired greyhound find a home, but not ready to fully commit? **Foster first!****

We understand that taking on a new pet is a big decision and you might want to find out how a greyhound will fit in to your lifestyle before you commit for life.

Many people every year open their hearts to a retired greyhound by providing them a foster home.

Most of those people fall in love and these beautiful, gentle dogs end up finding their forever homes.

**Find out more at [Gaptas.org.au](http://Gaptas.org.au)**

**tasracing** **greyhound racing**  
**Tasmania**

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Tasracing has increased the GAP marketing budget in 2016/17.

### This is designed to:

- Stimulate demand for greyhounds as pets.
- Enhance existing community perceptions of the breed.
- Retain and grow the number of foster carers.

### Key marketing activities include:

- Participation in the GAP national brand program, being championed by Greyhounds Australasia.
- A paid advertising schedule across multiple media channels with an emphasis on social media.
- A continued presence at community events (such as Agfest).



## REVIEW AND IMPROVE FOSTER CARE ARRANGEMENTS



Foster carers are a crucial aspect of the program. GAP would not succeed without the dedicated efforts of our volunteers. Tasracing is highly appreciative of the time and contribution from our GAP foster carers.

Tasracing is looking to introduce direct credits to foster carers to provide financial support instead of the existing optional weekly payment.

This is envisaged to help attract and retain foster carers and assist in some of the costs associated with fostering.

It is also intended to retain and grow the number of permanent foster carers by introducing benefits, including gift vouchers and a GAP merchandise incentive scheme.

## PRE-TESTING REGIME

Tasracing has been working on the development of a new pre-testing regime for GAP.

The proposed changes will place an enhanced responsibility on owners and/or trainers to help prepare their dogs for admission to GAP. It is hoped that this will help improve the number of dogs that pass the GAP behaviour protocols and be successfully adopted.

The proposal is that all greyhounds, prior to being accepted into the program, must pass a pre-testing regime.

Greyhounds that do not pass this testing will be taken home to allow the owner to further prepare the greyhound for re-testing at a later date.

The process will place an enhanced emphasis of responsible greyhound ownership on industry participants.

### Pre-testing Requirements:

- A Notice advising of the intention to introduce pre-testing from 1 July 2016.
- The “Enter your Dog” link on the website will be amended to “Entry/Pre-Testing” and link to an information page which will then link to a Pre-testing Booking Page. The Pre-Testing Booking page can also be accessed from the home page on the site.
- The Pre-Testing Booking page will be updated to show dates of upcoming testing dates and venues within the next month and allow a person to book a spot in one of the sessions. Once the session is booked out, it will no longer appear on the page.
- A Pre-Testing Booking confirmation will then be distributed to the applicant together with an information sheet.
- On the day of testing the applicant will be provided with a Pre-Assessment Outcome.

## NEW NATIONAL GAP BRAND

Tasracing has supported the development of a new National GAP master brand as championed by Greyhound Australasia (GA).

The new national GAP brand will sit above and alongside each of the state GAP program brands and will deliver a stronger, more consistent presence for the program in each state.

The new national GAP brand initiative hopes to achieve the following objectives:

- To better position the Greyhound racing industry as responsible. *“Responsible” means a considered approach to greyhound welfare from breeding decisions through to successful adoption.*
- To establish clear and consistent information about each state’s GAP program.
- To create efficiencies in marketing GAP.
- To better serve the community of applicants and adopters.
- To increase adoption rates.

## LEGISLATIVE CHANGE



Section 18 of the *Dog Control Act 2000* (Act) requires that the owner or person in charge of a greyhound ensures that the greyhound, including a GAP dog, while in a public place, is muzzled.

For easy identification, greyhounds that graduate from the GAP program are issued with a specific green collar with their GAP registration number attached.

The wearing of a muzzle in public sometimes hinders the recognition of the breed as a pet and may be a disincentive to some people to adopting a greyhound.

Application has been made to amend the Act so that greyhounds which graduate from the GAP are no longer required to wear a muzzle in public places.

A proposal is currently being considered by the Tasmanian Government and Tasracing is hopeful change can be enacted that will support greyhound adoption outcomes.



## QUESTIONS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like to discuss Tasracing's GAP Strategy or have any questions, please contact us:

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