



MEDIA RELEASE

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20 years and 6000 dogs on, the GAP keeps growing

Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) is marking a significant milestone this week with the 20th anniversary of the first dog being adopted through its Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP).

On March 17, 1996, two staff members from the Sandown Veterinary Clinic - Melanie Tochner and Anita Smith - made available for adoption the first GAP dog, a brindle female dog named Houdi.

Having recently finished her racing career, Houdi embarked on a new life, joining Mrs Smith and her husband Alistair in their family home.

More than 6100 greyhounds have found new homes through GAP in the ensuing 20 years including a record 847 in 2015 alone, making it one of the largest and most successful programs of its kind in the world.

Along the way, GAP also introduced innovations such as the Prison Pet Partnership where inmates at minimum security Victorian prisons foster greyhounds to prepare them for life as a family pet, weekly testing days around Victoria to assess a dog's suitability for adoption, set up a meet and greet yard to introduce greyhounds to their prospective new owner's other pets and established a dedicated veterinary clinic at its Seymour headquarters that handles all veterinary procedures, including de-sexing and dental work.

GAP's growth is set to continue as it looks to find new homes for more than 1000 greyhounds in 2016.

GRV chairman Bernie Carolan said the success of the program was integral to Greyhound Racing Victoria's values.

"Animal welfare is of utmost importance to Greyhound Racing Victoria and underpins all of our policies and procedures around racing," Mr Carolan said.

"But our concern for animal welfare continues well after the dogs have finished their racing careers and we want to provide the best possible lives for them.

"Greyhounds make wonderful pets. They are warm, great with kids and contrary to popular belief, they're quite happy to lounge around all day and don't require a great deal of exercise."



As part of the growth plans for GAP, Greyhound Racing Victoria is working on a major expansion of its Seymour headquarters and is looking to set up an additional facility closer to metropolitan Melbourne.

RSPCA Victoria has partnered with GAP since February 2014 to rehome greyhounds through its shelters.

“Through our partnership with GAP we have been able to find more homes for more greyhounds, which make excellent companions,” RSPCA Chief Operating Officer Jon McGregor said.

“Those that pass through the Greyhound Adoption Program are exempt from Victoria’s breed-specific legislation. This means they wear their special green GAP collar and are not required to wear a muzzle in public.

“Greyhounds are placid, affectionate, require little grooming and rarely bark. Most greyhounds only require a 15 minute walk each day. They sleep for around 20 hours a day and love nothing better than to snuggle up to their owners on the couch.”

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