

4 August 2019

Cat and Dog Statutory Review  
Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries  
PO Box 8349  
**Perth Business Centre WA 6849**

Via email: [catanddogreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:catanddogreview@dlgsc.wa.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

***Animal Australia submission to the Western Australian Cat and Dog statutory review***

Animals Australia is a peak national animal protection organisation. We represent some 30 member groups and over 2 million individual supporters. Animals Australia, along with our global arm, Animals International, has an unprecedented track record in investigating and exposing animal cruelty and for conducting world-first strategic public awareness campaigns. Our vision is a world where all animals are treated with compassion and respect and are free from cruelty.

While our chief focus is livestock, we have considerable experience and interest in other at-risk animals, including dogs and cats. In particular, Animals Australia is acutely aware of the plight of racing greyhounds in Australia, and has campaigned vigorously to improve the lives of these animals. With Animal Liberation Queensland, our investigations into the greyhound racing industry across New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland were aired on ABC *Four Corners* in 2015<sup>1</sup>, and led to a major overhaul of industry practices and thus the welfare of the dogs involved.

We are very committed to improving the lives of greyhounds, many of whom are deemed 'wastage' by the greyhound racing industry. As such, we have concentrated on issues pertaining to the greyhound in our submission to this Review.

***Current muzzling and on leash requirements for pet greyhounds in Western Australia***

The Review document 'Pause for Paws' sets out on page 11 the current legal requirements under the Dog Act 1976 (as updated by the Dog Amendment Act 2013 [Dog Act])<sup>2</sup> and Dog Regulations 2013 for pet greyhounds in relation to muzzling and on leash requirements:

*'Retired racing greyhounds can return to the community as household pets. Greyhounds must always be on a lead when they are in a public place. They are also required to wear a muzzle unless the dog has completed an approved training program.'*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.animalsaustralia.org/features/greyhound-racing-abc-four-corners.php>

<sup>2</sup>

[https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc\\_42227.pdf/\\$FILE/Dog%20Act%201976%20-%20%5B06-d0-00%5D.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_42227.pdf/$FILE/Dog%20Act%201976%20-%20%5B06-d0-00%5D.pdf?OpenElement)

*Greyhound associations and some members of the community have advocated for pet greyhounds not to have to be muzzled when in public places, whether the dog has had any training or not.*

*There are mixed views about whether greyhounds should be allowed to be off lead and/or unmuzzled in dog exercise areas or other public spaces<sup>3</sup>.*

It should be noted that the only approved (prescribed) training program under the Dog Act (s 33. Special provision for greyhounds) is the 'Greyhounds as Pets Program' (GAP) conducted by Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWAA)(see r28 of the Dog Regulations).

Note: we will use the term 'pet' greyhounds in this submission to reflect the term being used in the review document, i.e. greyhounds that are not (or are no longer) involved with greyhound racing, and so are living as companion animals.

### **Our response - Executive Summary**

Animals Australia does not support breed specific legislation (BSL), including that which imposes more restrictions on greyhounds than on other breeds of dogs kept as pets. As such, we do not support the current legal requirements in WA that pet greyhounds must be muzzled and on leash in all public places including 'dog exercise areas' (where other dogs may be off leash and not required to wear muzzles). We do not consider that the current exemption for greyhounds to not wear a muzzle if they have passed the GAP National Temperament Testing Assessment (Temperament Test or Green Collar Test) is sufficient to offset the negative impacts of this legislation on greyhounds and their owners, the reputation of the breed and hence 'adoptability' of these dogs, and on responsible dog ownership in general.

Muzzles also present a welfare risk to the dogs as they may cause distress if they are improperly fitted, or introduced abruptly to an unaccustomed dog. They may also prevent dogs from engaging in normal behaviour or from defending themselves against attack by another dog<sup>3</sup>. Use of a muzzle on an anxious dog may make the anxiety worse<sup>4</sup>.

There is no scientific or other basis to support these antiquated laws and regulations. Greyhounds are not over-represented anywhere in the world in data on attacks on people or animals. Indeed, greyhounds are generally regarded as a breed with low propensity for aggression.

Further, we contend that the current BSL in WA is potentially dangerous as it may foster over confidence in those greyhounds wearing a green collar and in all dogs of other breeds not wearing muzzles and off leash.

Instead of the current flawed system, we support the introduction of welfare standards to ensure all greyhounds - including those born into the racing industry - are provided with early and appropriate socialisation with other animals and people. Additionally, education of prospective and new owners is critical regarding appropriate socialisation; training and exercise requirements; characteristics of the breed; and the possible effects on individual dogs that may result from being part of the greyhound racing industry.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ava.com.au/policy-advocacy/policies/miscellaneous-welfare-issues-events-and-exhibits-involving-animals/greyhound-muzzling/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.greyhound-equality.org/?fbclid=IwAR3eeRrFsP6cpp0OlfICY6pmJldC7aJW95NAgSpo9ne7h3iuP-a\\_38tLHU](http://www.greyhound-equality.org/?fbclid=IwAR3eeRrFsP6cpp0OlfICY6pmJldC7aJW95NAgSpo9ne7h3iuP-a_38tLHU)

While dog breeds do have common characteristics and propensities, individuals within breeds vary enormously. Responsible dog ownership, including of pet greyhounds, is diminished by ineffective BSL, which also diminishes the welfare of greyhounds.

## Our response in detail

### **Lack of evidence to support breed specific legislation in greyhounds**

#### *Muzzling*

There is no evidence that a pet greyhound requires muzzling to 'prevent it from biting a person or animal' (Dog Act s33 Special provision for greyhounds) any more than any other breed of dog. While we acknowledge that s33 provides an exemption to wearing a muzzle in public if a greyhound has successfully completed a prescribed training programme, this is still an imposition not placed on other pet dogs. The fact that there is only one prescribed training program, also makes this more problematic.

The GAP operates in most jurisdictions but cannot and does not rehome all pre-raced and 'retired greyhounds'. Private rescue and animal welfare groups also rehome greyhounds, but together those efforts still cannot 'save' all the unwanted dogs bred or discarded by the industry, and several thousand healthy greyhounds are still 'euthanased' each year in Australia. Clearly for the welfare of these dogs more homes are needed to cope with ongoing unacceptable 'wastage' in the greyhound racing industry. In our strong view the imposition of muzzling only makes the rehoming and owning a greyhounds more difficult.

The GAP<sup>5</sup> website for WA states:

*'People are often unsure of what the muzzle means and which greyhounds need to wear them. First we'd like to assure you that a muzzle does not necessarily mean aggression. Anyone who has ever met a greyhound will tell you what a sweet natured dog they are and what wonderful pets they make.'*

*The Department of Local Government and Communities has amended the Dog Act 1976 to enable appropriately retired racing greyhounds to return to the community as pets without having to wear a muzzle. Exempt greyhounds are granted a "Green Collar status" and issued with a Green Collar after passing the National Temperament Testing Assessment. This is great news for greyhounds and helps to dispel the myth that greyhounds are vicious – something we know is far from the truth.*

*The Department, through the Dog Regulations 2013, prescribed Greyhounds as Pets WA (GAP) as a training organisation for the purposes of exempting a greyhound from wearing a muzzle in public. What this means is that when you adopt a greyhound from GAP you will be issued a Green Collar and identification card which proves your greyhound does not need to be muzzled in public. GAP is currently the only greyhound rehoming group recognised in WA able to issue Green Collars.*

*The National Temperament Testing Assessment is a rigorous behavioural program developed jointly by all official GAP programs around Australia. It was written by a qualified Animal Behaviourist, in conjunction with each State GAP program and draws upon the collective decades of experience of these organisations. This helps*

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.greyhoundsaspets.com.au/>

*to ensure that when you adopt a greyhound from GAP it will make a great pet and a wonderful addition to your family.'*

Animals Australia supports the (industry-supported) GAP in principle, and indeed industry needs to do much more to ensure dogs exiting it have 'lives worth living'. However, we are also cognisant of doubts raised in the scientific literature and by experienced veterinarians about the **reliability** of the Green Collar Test, and more broadly other 'one-off' dog behaviour assessment tests. We provide specific information regarding this concern below.

Dr Karen Dawson is a veterinarian who is experienced in the behaviour and welfare of greyhounds, and is also a member of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists (Veterinary Behaviour Chapter). She has assessed over 600 greyhounds for rehoming or muzzling exemptions in Queensland and NSW collectively. Dr Dawson states that it is questionable whether unqualified assessors possess the ability to diagnose certain behaviour issues in greyhounds accurately, and thus reliably predict the impact of those on the accuracy of a temperament test. It is Dr Dawson's professional opinion that this, in addition to the requirement greyhounds be housed at the GAP kennel for up to 4 nights, significantly impacts on the accuracy of the assessment process.

This concern about accuracy has implications for community safety and, like the Greyhound Equality Society (GES)<sup>6</sup>, we believe that promoting responsible pet ownership is a far more effective method to increase community safety than imposing blanket laws that unfairly penalise pet greyhounds and their owners. These BSLs, and particularly the requirement for muzzling, instead create more unwarranted and damaging social alienation for dogs that have spent much of their lives in isolation in the racing industry.

A study by Thomas (2017) that examined the 'Characteristics of ex-racing greyhounds in New Zealand and their impact on re-homing' found:

*'Whether or not a dog had raced had no significant effect on the likelihood of successful re-homing. Greyhounds passing the temperament test with a basic pass were less likely to be successfully re-homed than greyhounds scoring a higher pass indicative of lower prey drive. Further investigation of the validity and reliability of the temperament test is warranted'*

To date, no canine temperament test has been adequately validated with regards to accuracy and repeatability. This year the esteemed veterinary epidemiologist Gary Patronek and others published a paper 'What is the evidence for reliability and validity of behavior evaluations for shelter dogs? A prequel to "No better than flipping a coin"'. The authors stated:

*'Despite 25+ years of publications, including solid studies performed under good to ideal conditions by skilled investigators, findings indicate there is no evidence that any canine behavior evaluation or individual subtest has come close to meeting accepted standards justifying claims that it is validated for routine use in shelters. Furthermore, the mean reported false-positive error rate in study populations was 35.1%, whereas in more typical shelter populations, it was estimated at 63.8%'*

There is sufficient evidence to question whether the Green Collar Test should be the basis for an exemption for a pet greyhound not to wear a muzzle in public. Indeed, there is no

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.greyhound-equality.org/?fbclid=IwAR3eeRrFsP6cpp0OlzflCY6pmJldC7aJW95NAgSpo9ne7h3iuP-a\\_38tLHU](http://www.greyhound-equality.org/?fbclid=IwAR3eeRrFsP6cpp0OlzflCY6pmJldC7aJW95NAgSpo9ne7h3iuP-a_38tLHU)

basis in the scientific literature that former racing greyhounds pose more of a danger to the public or other animals than dogs of other breeds, which do not have to pass this Test.

### **Legal inconsistencies**

Other inconsistencies in the current Dog Act include exemptions for dogs requiring to be on leash or similar in public places (s31). Besides designated dog exercise areas, these include:

*‘...a foxhound in a pack bona fide engaged in hunting or hound exercise or in going to or returning from hunting or hound exercise; or (dogs) being used for retrieving, duck hunting or other customary sporting purposes’.*

These dogs do not require muzzling under the Dog Act. The fact greyhounds do, and must be on leash or similar even in dog exercise areas, is inconsistent, unfair, and without scientific basis. There is no suggestion in the scientific literature or even anecdotally that greyhounds are more likely to bite people or animals than any other breed of dog. Indeed, the GAP program encourages people to adopt greyhounds because they:

*‘...make great pets, they are quiet, well mannered, and very easy to live with. They are friendly, lazy, calm, affectionate, clean, loving, trusting, good-natured and very social... Greyhounds love the company of other dogs. If you are looking for a companion for an existing dog, a greyhound is the perfect addition to your family’<sup>7</sup>.*

Further, there is no evidence to suggest that in countries such as the USA, where greyhounds are not subject to BSL, there is a higher rate of aggressive incidents towards people or other animals. A USA study (Duffy 2008) looking at ‘Breed differences in canine aggression’ found:

*‘Golden Retrievers, Labradors Retrievers, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Brittany Spaniels, Greyhounds and Whippets were the least aggressive toward both humans and dogs’.*

The authors noted however that:

*‘Canine aggression poses serious public health and animal welfare concerns. Most of what is understood about breed differences in aggression comes from reports based on bite statistics, behavior clinic caseloads, and experts’ opinions. Information on breed-specific aggressiveness derived from such Sources may be misleading due to biases attributable to a disproportionate risk of injury associated with larger and/or more physically powerful breeds and the existence of breed stereotypes’.*

Importantly, a 2013 study by Patronek in the US found that:

*‘Most dog bite related fatalities (DBRFs) were characterized by coincident, preventable factors, and breed was not one of these. The results supported previous recommendations for multifactorial approaches, instead of single-factor solutions such as breed-specific legislation, for dog bite prevention’.*

Greyhounds are not over-represented in aggressive incidents towards people or other animals anywhere, including in most countries with no special regulations that apply to pet greyhounds, nor in Australia where there are strict leash and muzzle regulations in most

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.greyhoundsaspets.com.au/>

jurisdictions<sup>8</sup>. Given that most dog bites (serious aggressive encounters between dogs and people, often children) occur in the home<sup>9</sup>, the current WA muzzle laws would in any event be irrelevant.

Accurate Australian data on breeds of dog responsible for biting people and animals are difficult to find (and better recording is needed). Nonetheless, those that have been published do not feature the greyhound. Again, there appears to be little justification for muzzling and leashing greyhounds when other dog breeds in Australia are not subjected to this in public.

### ***What other major stakeholders think of BSL and muzzling***

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) states in its BSL policy<sup>10</sup> that:

*'Legislation to prevent dog bites and to manage aggressive dogs should focus on the individual dog and the owner, not the breed. Breed-specific legislation for dog bite prevention has failed to reduce the frequency of dog bites both in Australia and overseas'.*

Further the AVA's policy (**see Appendix A**) on the muzzling of greyhounds states:

*'The AVA opposes compulsory pet Greyhound muzzling. It is contrary to the AVA's policy on breed-specific legislation...  
Muzzles may cause distress if they are improperly fitted, or introduced abruptly to an unaccustomed dog. Muzzles may prevent dogs from engaging in normal behaviour or from defending themselves against attack by another dog...  
Muzzling exemption tests are problematic, as they have not been validated for accuracy, repeatability or reliability.  
The mandatory use of muzzles on pet Greyhounds works against the goal of re-homing Greyhounds, as it creates a negative societal perception about these animals...  
The compulsory muzzling of dogs that have not adequately adapted to wearing a muzzle may cause distress to the animal, and many new adoptive families would be unaware of the effect this may be having on their pet.  
Retired Greyhounds should not be subjected to extensions of the rules of racing.  
Existing local animal laws provide adequately for the control and management of dogs in public places'.*

Similarly, the RSPCA '*...supports the complete removal of compulsory muzzling requirements for pet greyhounds out in public*<sup>11</sup>:

*'Greyhound muzzling laws are based on 'breed' not on individual dog behaviour and are an example of breed-specific legislation (BSL). There is no evidence to show that greyhounds as a breed pose any greater risk to the public compared to other dog breeds or mix of breeds. The RSPCA does not support breed specific legislation. Compulsory greyhound muzzling is contrary to RSPCA policy which states that the use of muzzles should be based on the behaviour of each individual dog...*

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/SCEI/Dogs\\_Inquiry/Subs/Submission\\_36\\_-\\_Greyhound\\_Equality\\_Society.pdf](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/SCEI/Dogs_Inquiry/Subs/Submission_36_-_Greyhound_Equality_Society.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Report of a Victorian study of dog bites – presented by **A/Prof Ricardo J. Soares Magalhães** (University of Queensland) at the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists, Science Week, July 2019.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ava.com.au/policy-advocacy/policies/companion-animals-dog-behaviour/breed-specific-legislation/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.rspca.org.au/blog/2017/greyhounds-pets-three-things-about-greyhounds-might-surprise-you>

*Unfortunately the misconception that greyhounds need to be muzzled has major ramifications for greyhound rehoming, preventing many greyhounds that are discarded by the racing industry from finding a new home. Removing muzzling laws would significantly help improve the image of greyhounds and thus help increase rehoming rates.*

*Compulsory muzzling of pet greyhounds in public occurs only in Australia and Northern Ireland. RSPCA Australia has not identified any evidence of increased safety risks or incidents/issues arising from the absence of compulsory muzzling of pet greyhounds in public places in other countries'<sup>12</sup>*

For further details see **Appendix B**.

The RSPCA also states that it:

*'...does not believe that BSL is in any way effective in preventing or reducing dog attacks or in protecting the public from dangerous dogs'<sup>13</sup>.*

### **Negative impacts on individual greyhounds**

Dr Dawson states that a muzzle prevents a greyhound from being able to engage in usual dog-to-dog socialization, which is crucial once a greyhound has finished racing. This will not only impact on how they interact with other dogs, but also adversely affect how other dogs, and arguably people, may interact with them<sup>14</sup>. She also believes that muzzles are over used as a control method in dogs, when better outcomes may be achieved using behavioural modification techniques based on positive reinforcement. This is, of course, a much more humane option. Muzzling an anxious dog can also adversely affect how that dog experiences new situations and how it learns to adapt to them<sup>15</sup>.

Dr Dawson has also stated that from a welfare perspective, the greatest concern is perhaps the notion that all greyhounds have been adequately habituated and desensitized to wearing a muzzle, when this is not the case in young, un-trained/un-raced greyhounds. This may represent upwards of 40% of the 'racing' greyhound population, some of whom may be 'adopted' when they are not showing racing 'promise'. Compulsory muzzling of dogs that have not been adequately accustomed to wearing a muzzle may actually increase the distress experienced by the animal. Most new adoptive families would be unaware of the impact this may be having on their pet<sup>16</sup>.

It is Dr Dawson's professional opinion that muzzles deny dogs the opportunity to engage in normal behaviour. Any device that does this must be questioned given the denied behaviour may be a distress sign. Most veterinary behaviourists would not utilize a muzzle prior to an extensive desensitization process and only as part of an overall behavioural management plan.

Currently, many pet greyhounds are denied the opportunity of effective socialisation, recall and obedience training in public places and situations, due to the leash requirements for all greyhounds, and the muzzle requirements for non-GAP adoptees.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/should-pet-greyhounds-have-to-wear-muzzles/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-is-the-rspcas-view-on-breed-specific-legislation/>

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/SCEI/Dogs\\_Inquiry/Subs/Submission\\_36\\_-\\_Greyhound\\_Equality\\_Society.pdf](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/SCEI/Dogs_Inquiry/Subs/Submission_36_-_Greyhound_Equality_Society.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

The potential of increased adoption rates through a removal of the muzzle requirement for pet greyhounds comes at negligible (if any) costs to community protection, as pet greyhounds would continue to be governed by the laws that govern all pet dogs and support community safety.

### ***History of greyhound muzzling laws***

Greyhound muzzling laws originated in the 1800's as a result of coursing greyhounds being trained in open fields (to pursue rabbits) and the concern the dogs would attack sheep. Since coursing for live animals (quarry) has been illegal for many years, we believe that the archaic BSL should no longer be imposed on pet greyhounds<sup>17</sup>.

It is also important to note that in 1999, Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV), then called Greyhound Racing Control Board (GRCB), resolved that the long-term goal was to repeal the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (DAA), so that pet greyhounds would not be required to be muzzled<sup>18</sup>. This finally occurred in January this year, bringing Victoria into line with the USA and the UK where there is also a racing industry but no BSL for pet greyhounds.<sup>19</sup>

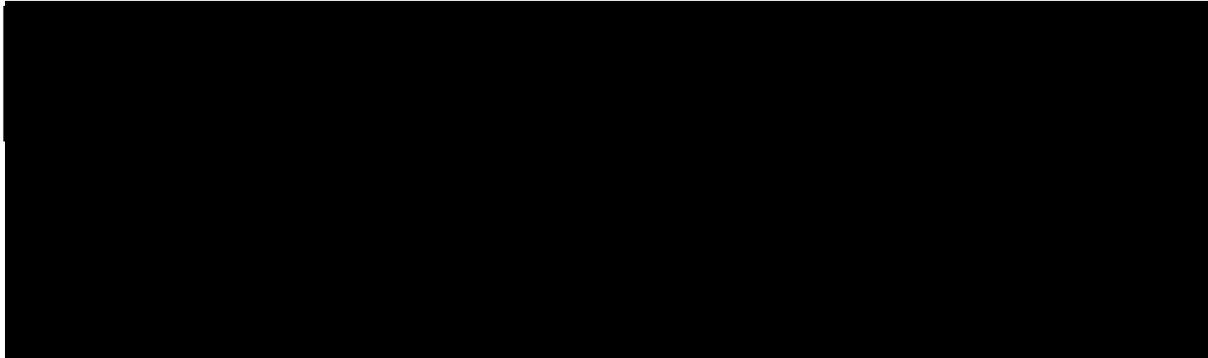
As in Victoria, the removal of the muzzling provision for pet greyhounds in WA would ensure that the legislation retains its original function of community protection from racing greyhounds, without the adverse consequences for greyhounds that have never raced, or have concluded their racing career and have transitioned to pet life. This, and the removal of the need for greyhounds to be on a leash at dog exercise areas, would promote responsible pet ownership.

Indeed all companion animal owners must be encouraged to recognise their clear duty of care in relation to the control of their dogs in the community – including if necessary the muzzling and leashing of some dogs in some situations based on the ***individual*** animal's behaviours. Our concern in this submission is entirely focussed on the baseless inequity of imposing these restrictions on pet greyhounds as an entire class.

**In conclusion**, we commend this submission to you and in particular recommend the law be amended to remove the requirement for the muzzling of greyhounds in Western Australia, and to remove the requirement for greyhounds to be leashed in designated dog exercise areas.

We would be pleased to provide any clarification or provide further comment if required.

Yours sincerely,



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<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

## References and abstracts

### **What is the evidence for reliability and validity of behavior evaluations for shelter dogs? A prequel to "No better than flipping a coin"**

By: Patronek, Gary J.; Bradley, Janis; Arps, Elizabeth

JOURNAL OF VETERINARY BEHAVIOR-CLINICAL APPLICATIONS AND RESEARCH Volume: 31 Pages: 43-58 Published: MAY-JUN 2019

Conversations with stakeholders, as well as remarks in the literature, suggest that there may be confusion about what can be concluded when a canine behavior evaluation has been described as being "validated," "reliable," or "predictive." To assess the evidence, we searched PubMed and ScienceDirect using the terms "canine," "behavior evaluation," "temperament test," and "shelter" to identify articles that assessed the validity or reliability of evaluations based on battery of tests used or intended for screening shelter dogs for behavior labeled aggressive and/or for adoption suitability. Despite 25+ years of publications, including solid studies performed under good to ideal conditions by skilled investigators, findings indicate there is no evidence that any canine behavior evaluation or individual subtest has come close to meeting accepted standards justifying claims that it is validated for routine use in shelters. Furthermore, the mean reported false-positive error rate in study populations was 35.1%, whereas in more typical shelter populations, it was estimated at 63.8%. We propose that the discrepancy between the actual state of the science and what people assume has been accomplished is primarily due to the following: [1] confusion from mixing colloquial with scientific uses of words such as "validated," "predictive," "reliable," and "agreement"; [2] the limitations of correlation and regression as statistical methods for demonstrating agreement or predictive ability; [3] failure to account for the difference between predictive validity of an instrument in populations of dogs in a research exercise versus predictive ability and error rate for individual dogs in real-world settings; [4] conflating statistical significance with clinical significance; and, as a result of 1-4 aforementioned, [5] conferring overall validation status, despite the results of studies being much more circumscribed. Given their published error rates, one explanation may be that behavior evaluations lack basic face validity and/or a clear focus as to what is being measured and its relevance to postadoption outcomes. This argues against use of any behavior evaluation to make important decisions for shelter dogs, especially if the behavior(s) of concern were only observed during provocative testing. These findings indicate an opportunity to acknowledge what has been learned and bring together all stakeholders to consider the real needs of shelter dogs and what the future might look like.

### **Characteristics of ex-racing greyhounds in New Zealand and their impact on re-homing**

By: Thomas, J. B.; Adams, N. J.; Farnworth, M. J.

ANIMAL WELFARE\_ Volume: 26 Issue: 3 Pages: 345-354 Published: AUG 2017

A small proportion of greyhounds surplus to the racing industry are entered into specialist re-homing organisations to be re-purposed as pets. Records of 835 greyhounds, from New Zealand Greyhounds as Pets, were used to investigate whether pre-adoption characteristics (age, sex, racing record, reason entered) and management factors (temperament test result, foster and trainer effects) had a bearing on re-homing success, and comparisons were made with shelter studies. Re-homing greyhounds as pets is very successful with 85.5% ultimately successfully re-homed. Only 2.9% fail as a result of failed adoptions and 11.6% fail the initial temperament test and are therefore not considered for adoption. Greyhounds were more likely than shelter dogs to pass an initial temperament test and be adopted, and less likely to be returned after one month. However, adopted greyhounds were just as likely as shelter dogs to be returned after six months. Logistic regression revealed the youngest age group (<

25 months old) were more likely to pass the initial temperament test than older greyhounds. The re-homing success of greyhounds subsequently made available for adoption was not affected by age, but a sex effect was evident with females more likely to be successfully re-homed than males. Whether or not a dog had raced had no significant effect on the likelihood of successful re-homing. Greyhounds passing the temperament test with a basic pass were less likely to be successfully re-homed than greyhounds scoring a higher pass indicative of lower prey drive. Further investigation of the validity and reliability of the temperament test is warranted.

### **Co-occurrence of potentially preventable factors in 256 dog bite-related fatalities in the United States (2000-2009)**

By: Patronek, Gary J.; Sacks, Jeffrey J.; Delise, Karen M.; et al.

JAVMA-JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL

ASSOCIATION Volume: 243 Issue: 12 Pages: 1726-1736 Published: DEC 15 2013

**Objective-**To examine potentially preventable factors in human dog bite-related fatalities (DBRFs) on the basis of data from sources that were more complete, verifiable, and accurate than media reports used in previous studies.

**Design-**Prospective case series.

**Sample-**256 DBRFs occurring in the United States from 2000 to 2009.

**Procedures-**DBRFs were identified from media reports and detailed histories were compiled on the basis of reports from homicide detectives, animal control reports, and interviews with investigators for coding and descriptive analysis.

**Results-**Major co-occurrent factors for the 256 DBRFs included absence of an able-bodied person to intervene (n = 223 [87.1%]), incidental or no familiar relationship of victims with dogs (218 [85.2%]), owner failure to neuter dogs (216 [84.4%]), compromised ability of victims to interact appropriately with dogs (198[77.4%]), dogs kept isolated from regular positive human interactions versus family dogs (195 [76.2%]), owners' prior mismanagement of dogs (96 [37.5%]), and owners' history of abuse or neglect of dogs (54 [21.1%]). Four or more of these factors co-occurred in 206 (80.5%) deaths. For 401 dogs described in various media accounts, reported breed differed for 124 (30.9%); for 346 dogs with both media and animal control breed reports, breed differed for 139 (40.2%). Valid breed determination was possible for only 45 (176%) DBRFs; 20 breeds, including 2 known mixes, were identified.

**Conclusions and Clinical Relevance-**Most DBRFs were characterized by coincident, preventable factors; breed was not one of these. Study results supported previous recommendations for multifactorial approaches, instead of single-factor solutions such as breed-specific legislation, for dog bite prevention.

### **Breed differences in canine aggression**

By: Duffy, Deborah L.; Hsu, Yuying; Serpell, James A.

APPLIED ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR SCIENCE Volume: 114 Issue: 3-4 Pages: 441-460 Published: DEC 1 2008

Canine aggression poses serious public health and animal welfare concerns. Most of what is understood about breed differences in aggression comes from reports based on bite statistics, behavior clinic caseloads, and experts' opinions. Information on breed-specific aggressiveness derived from such Sources may be misleading due to biases attributable to a disproportionate risk of injury associated with larger and/or more physically powerful breeds and the existence of breed stereotypes. The present study surveyed the owners of more than 30 breeds of dogs using the Canine Behavioral Assessment and Research Questionnaire (C-BARQ), a validated and reliable instrument for assessing dogs' typical and recent responses to it variety of common stimuli and situations. Two independent data samples (a random sample of breed club members and an online sample) yielded significant

differences among breeds in aggression directed toward strangers, owners and dogs (Kruskal-Wallis tests,  $P < 0.0001$ ).

Eight breeds common to both datasets (Dachshund, English Springer Spaniel, Golden Retriever, Labrador Retriever, Poodle, Rottweiler, Shetland Sheepdog and Siberian Husky) ranked similarly,  $r(s) = 0.723$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ;  $r(s) = 0.929$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ;  $r(s) = 0.592$ ,  $P = 0.123$ , for aggression directed toward strangers, dogs and owners, respectively. Some breeds scored higher than average for aggression directed toward both humans and dogs (e.g., Chihuahuas and Dachshunds) while other breeds scored high only for specific targets (e.g., dog-directed aggression among Akitas and Pit Bull Terriers). In general, aggression was most severe when directed toward other dogs followed by unfamiliar people and household members. Breeds with the greatest percentage of dogs exhibiting serious aggression (bites or bite attempts) toward humans included Dachshunds, Chihuahuas and Jack Russell Terriers (toward strangers and owners); Australian Cattle Dogs (toward strangers); and American Cocker Spaniels and Beagles (toward owners). More than 20% of Akitas, Jack Russell Terriers and Pit Bull Terriers were reported as displaying serious aggression toward unfamiliar dogs. Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Brittany Spaniels, Greyhounds and Whippets were the least aggressive toward both humans and dogs. Among English Springer Spaniels, conformation-bred dogs were more aggressive to humans and dogs than field-bred dogs (stranger aggression: Mann-Whitney U test,  $z = 3.880$ ,  $P < 0.0001$ ; owner aggression:  $z = 2.110$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ; dog-directed aggression:  $z = 1.93$ ,  $P = 0.054$ ), suggesting a genetic influence on the behavior. The opposite pattern was observed for owner-directed aggression among Labrador Retrievers, ( $z = 2.18$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) indicating that higher levels of aggression are not attributable to breeding for show per se.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Australian Veterinary Association policy on greyhound muzzling**

<https://www.ava.com.au/policy-advocacy/policies/miscellaneous-welfare-issues-events-and-exhibits-involving-animals/greyhound-muzzling/>

#### **Greyhound muzzling**

Ratification Date: 28 Feb 2017

#### ***Policy***

The AVA opposes compulsory pet Greyhound muzzling. It is contrary to the AVA's policy on breed-specific legislation, which states that "legislation to prevent dog bites and to manage aggressive dogs should focus on the individual dog and the owner, not the breed".

#### ***Background***

There is a compulsory requirement for pet Greyhounds to wear a muzzle in public in all states and territories of Australia, with the exception of the Northern Territory and many local councils in Queensland.

Muzzles may cause distress if they are improperly fitted, or introduced abruptly to an unaccustomed dog. Muzzles may prevent dogs from engaging in normal behaviour or from defending themselves against attack by another dog.

Pet Greyhounds in some jurisdictions may undergo muzzling exemption tests, signified by the issuing of a green collar that must be worn by the dog when it is in public places.

Muzzling exemption tests are problematic, as they have not been validated for accuracy, repeatability or reliability.

The mandatory use of muzzles on pet Greyhounds works against the goal of re-homing Greyhounds, as it creates a negative societal perception about these animals. It is likely that the historic requirement for use of muzzles in racing animals was linked to the illegal practice of live baiting. While recognising that recent media reports about live baiting practices may have heightened concerns about the potential threat that Greyhounds pose to the community, the evidence to support the conclusion that these animals are more dangerous as a result is equivocal.

Many young, untrained or unraced Greyhounds are adopted as pets every year. The compulsory muzzling of dogs that have not adequately adapted to wearing a muzzle may cause distress to the animal, and many new adoptive families would be unaware of the effect this may be having on their pet.

Retired Greyhounds should not be subjected to extensions of the rules of racing. Existing local animal laws provide adequately for the control and management of dogs in public places.

#### ***Recommendations***

1. Removal of compulsory legislative muzzling requirements for pet Greyhounds while in a public place.

2. Introduction of welfare standards to ensure all Greyhounds are afforded early and appropriate socialisation opportunities with other pets and people.
3. Education of prospective new owners on the socialisation, training and exercise requirements and limitations of the breed and the individual at the time of rehoming, in lieu of additional layers of legislation.

***Other relevant policies***

Breed-specific legislation

Puppy socialisation

***Reference***

Australian Veterinary Association. Dangerous dogs: a sensible solution.

2012. <http://www.ava.com.au/newsarticle/dangerous-dogs-%E2%80%93-sensible-solution>

## **APPENDIX B**

### **RSPCA Knowledgebase**

<https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/should-pet-greyhounds-have-to-wear-muzzles/>

#### **Should pet greyhounds have to wear muzzles?**

In some Australian jurisdictions, there is a compulsory requirement for pet greyhounds to wear a muzzle in public.

Greyhound muzzling laws are based on 'breed' not on individual dog behaviour and are an example of breed-specific legislation (BSL). There is no evidence to show that greyhounds as a breed pose any greater risk to the public compared to other dog breeds or mix of breeds. The RSPCA does not support breed specific legislation. Compulsory greyhound muzzling is contrary to RSPCA policy which states that the use of muzzles should be based on the *behaviour* of each individual dog.

Compulsory muzzling contributes to negative public perceptions about greyhounds and their suitability as pets. Most people are not aware that compulsory muzzling requirements are in place and therefore mistakenly conclude that greyhounds are muzzled due to an aggressive and dangerous temperament. In reality, greyhounds generally have friendly and gentle dispositions and make fantastic pets.

Unfortunately the misconception that greyhounds need to be muzzled has major ramifications for greyhound rehoming, preventing many greyhounds that are discarded by the racing industry from finding a new home. Removing muzzling laws would significantly help improve the image of greyhounds and thus help increase rehoming rates.

Compulsory muzzling of pet greyhounds in public occurs only in Australia and Northern Ireland. RSPCA Australia has not identified any evidence of increased safety risks or incidents/issues arising from the absence of compulsory muzzling of pet greyhounds in public places in other countries.

The RSPCA supports the complete removal of compulsory muzzling requirements for pet greyhounds while in a public place. Some jurisdictions have already removed or modified compulsory muzzling requirements for pet greyhounds. Please check with your relevant local jurisdiction for information specific to your area. .