

Greyhound Welfare and Management

How does current legislation protect the welfare of greyhounds?

The welfare and management of greyhounds is covered under existing Territory legislation including the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* and the *Domestic Animals Act 2000*. The *Racing Act 1999* provides the legislative framework for racing (and betting on racing) of certain animals, including greyhounds.

The *Animal Welfare Act* regulates offences related to animals such as animal cruelty and is administered by Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS). The Act has a range of enforcement powers to promote and monitor acceptable standards of care and protect animals from cruelty or welfare offences. Inspectors (including RSPCA officers) are appointed to enforce the Act.

The *Domestic Animals Act* provides the framework for the keeping of animals, including dogs. This Act provides for the registration of dogs, breeding controls, requirements around the keeping of multiple dogs, control of dogs and other associated provisions. The Act also includes inspection and enforcement powers.

Registration

As with all dogs in the Territory, greyhounds (including racing greyhounds) are required to be registered when the dog:

- is over 8 weeks old;
- has been kept in the ACT for 28 days or more
- the dog's keeper has been an ACT resident for 28 days or more.

Registration can be established via Access Canberra on 13 22 81 or online at accesscanberra.act.gov.au.

Changes to registration details due to a change of owner or address must be advised to Domestic Animal Services within 14 days. The easiest way to achieve this is via email direct to DAS at dogcontrol@act.gov.au or contact via Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

Breeding requirements

Owners of greyhounds wishing to breed their dogs can apply to Domestic Animal Services to keep their dog/s entire. This permit means they are exempt from the offence under the Domestic Animals Act of owning a dog which has not been de-sexed.

However some exemptions do apply, including:

- the dog is less than six months old, or
- Domestic Animal Services is satisfied the dog is a racing greyhound.

Keeping four or more dogs

Under the *Domestic Animals Act*, it is an offence for a person to keep four or more dogs unless in accordance with a multiple dog licence.

The licence is issued by Domestic Animal Services after a site visit is conducted. A licence will only be granted where a number of requirements have been met, including the suitability of the owner (for example, no previous animal welfare offences) and the suitability of the premises and the pens/runs in which the dogs will be kept. DAS also consults with surrounding residents before issuing a licence.

Greyhounds in public places

Recent amendments to the *Domestic Animals Act* (which commenced on 15 June 2017) removed the mandatory requirement for greyhounds to wear a muzzle while in public, and the limit of three greyhounds being walked at any one time. However, the use of a muzzle should be considered for any breed of dog when the responsible owner considers there may be a risk that the dog may attack another animal or person.

Greyhounds need to comply with all other existing requirements for dogs in public places. This includes being on a leash except in designated off-leash areas or enclosed dog parks and complying with all animal nuisance requirements.

Re-homing

Like any other dog owner, greyhound owners may surrender their dog(s) to Domestic Animal Services or RSPCA ACT. Owners will be requested to complete a surrender form which outlines the dog's history and assists in assessing the dogs for re-homing. Domestic Animal Services actively works with many rescue groups, including Greyhound Rescue, to re-home as many dogs as possible.

Owners can also sell or give away their dogs directly to other members of the public. Where ownership of a dog is to be transferred, it is a requirement under the *Domestic Animals Act* that within 14 days of the transfer, the former owner of the dog notify Domestic Animal Services of the name and address of the new owner. The easiest way to achieve this is via email direct to DAS at dogcontrol@act.gov.au or contact via Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

Penalties

The treatment of greyhounds is covered by the existing penalties for animal cruelty in the Territory. Maximum penalties of up to 100 penalty units (\$15,000) or 1 year imprisonment or both apply where person commits an act of cruelty on an animal. In certain circumstances, that penalty rises to 200 penalty units (\$30,000) and 2 years imprisonment where the cruelty causes death or serious injury to an animal.

More information

For more information about the services provided by Domestic Animal Services please refer to www.tccs.act.gov.au/city-living/pets or contact Access Canberra on 13 22 81.