

Animal charity evolves through crisis

The Waiheke Island Society for the Care of Animals is devoted to the upkeep of the island's furry friends, come rain, shine or pandemic.

Having had to close its doors through the Covid-19 lockdown period, WISCA manager Michell Hopkins and her team found temporary homes for all the animals in their care. After six weeks of isolation and cuddly company, however, Michell says many of those animals have unexpectedly found their forever homes.

"All the animals we had went into foster care before level four, and I'm fairly confident none are coming back," she says.

During level four, Michell was contacted about welfare concerns, but was luckily able to track down and deal with the issues without breaking bubbles. WISCA also set up a contactless animal food delivery system from their shop.

For level three, operations have seen the return of skeleton staff to manage the evol-



Cat lovers Belle Wilson holds Stewart and her brother Alex Wilson holds Gary. The tabby kitten brothers are happy with their forever home at the Wilsons.



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ing environment of the op shop and keep the not-for-profit serving the community.

"We have had a big clean out and changed the layout of the shop," says Michell. "We have also set up an online platform on Facebook to sell goods through contactless trading."

The group is called the WISCA Pussy Cat Boutique, and as well as selling goods from the store they are also offering a personal shopping experience.

"If someone messages us and they want something specific, like a pink jumper, our team go through and find what we have, photograph the selection and send it to the buyer to choose from," says Michell. "The whole process is contactless."

Level three also offered WISCA the abil-

ity to open for donations again. To comply with the government regulations, drop-off is allowed by appointment only on Monday, Wednesday and Friday until 1pm.

"That way we can allow the donations to sit for 24 hours before handling them," says Michell.

The new system has worked remarkably well, and WISCA aims to integrate some of the processes into the operational procedures even as the levels drop.

As for the annual Easter One Day Designer sale, Michell says it will definitely still happen, it's just a case of when.

The hugely popular event raised more than \$25,000 last year and saw people queued through Oneroa waiting for doors to open.

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Fostered animals find forever homes during the lockdown.

“I’m picking that as soon as we are able, she will be a go. The problem right now is the number of people that are allowed. “100 people is just not going to cut it.”
Jessie Dean

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