

It is more than a decade since Friends of Palestine Tasmania first became active. Never before in the movement is there so much at stake in our advocacy for the people of Palestine, their right to life, dignity and human rights.

As well as the ongoing commitment to the cause of Palestinians, we must act in our own country for the movement to remain strong and effective. In Australia and across the world our democratic right to fight for the rights and justice for Palestinians in the light of a genocide and increasing restrictions and punishment for those speaking out is facing new challenges.

In reviewing the past year, there is, however, much to celebrate and appreciate in what Friends of Palestine Tasmania has achieved – together with our members, supporters and other civil society organisations.

As the genocide and the reality of over 72,000 deaths that can be accounted for escalated (it is estimated thousands are still buried under rubble in Gaza with the Lancet putting the possible number at 240,000 unaccounted for), the efforts of all of you enabled us to keep the focus on the unfolding genocide.

The year included some very significant events, some hosted by FOPT and others where we worked collaboratively with organisations who share similar goals and commitment to the just cause of Palestine.

We provided Tasmanians with opportunities listen to, learn from and be inspired by people with first-hand experience of working in Gaza and from those with expert knowledge of international law, human rights and Australia's obligations.

Some events and organisations with whom we worked collegially over 2025 are:

Tasmanian Palestinian Advocacy Group (TPAN): continues to inspire, using its energy and creativity to bring regular rallies to Hobart and Launceston throughout 2025 as well as film evenings, cultural events and musical programs.

March - Palestinian Australian New Zealand Medical Association: Dr Chris Holden, Chris is a Tasmanian doctor who had recently returned from Gaza. In March he spoke to us of his experiences providing medical aid to the people of Gaza while under bombardment. Chris worked in Gaza, through PANZMA. Chris shared his experience and provided valuable insight into life on the ground for the people of Gaza, their life threatening injuries, destroyed infrastructure and destruction of the environment.

Horia Abou-Eid, a spokesperson for Islamic Relief Australia who also works in conjunction with PANZMA attended the event and provided lots of information about the work being done in

Palestine, attempting to strengthen the destroyed health system and provide health and emergency care.

April - Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) - spearhead by the inspiring and focused Margaret Reynolds, FOPT collaborated with Amnesty International, 'Educators for Peace, Medact Tas, Quakers Tasmania and Women in Black, on a lunch time event at Hobart Town Hall '*Can Tasmanian Federal Parliamentarians Contribute New Priorities in Foreign and Defence Policy*'.

May - PIEN (Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network) presented '*Who Owns the Holy Land?*' in both Launceston and Hobart with the support of FOPT and TPAN. This stimulating discussion enabled Muslim, Jewish and Christian voices to share their stories and vision for peace.

June - If weaponising food and starving children crosses your red line, here is what to do – Mercury advertisement

Supported by generous donations from members and supporters, Friends of Palestine Tasmania placed a half page advertisement in the Mercury. This coincided with comments from the International Committee on the Red Cross which stated that Gaza is 'worse than hell on earth.' The advertisement called on all Tasmanians to contact their local Federal Member of Parliament demanding the Australian government take action to bring an immediate ceasefire into Gaza, recognise Palestinian statehood in June 2026, sanction Israel PM for crimes against humanity, make Israel accountable to the International Criminal Court for abetting war crimes and illegal settlements and expel the Israeli Ambassador from Australia.

It took several months before a limited ceasefire was called and there was a positive outcome about Australia recognising Palestinian statehood. All other issues remain unresolved with no action being taken by the Labor Government against Israel despite breaches of international law and ceasefire violations and ongoing relationships embedded between Israel and Australia

July - Screening of BBC documentary, "*Doctors Under Attack*." While shelved by the BBC after it was determined that it "was too controversial and not impartial, it has been screened world wide. We thank Robert Alcock who brought this important documentary to Hobart. The film is a detailed examination of the destruction of 36 hospitals on Gaza by the Israel Defence Force.

FOPT supported the President to attend the Converge on Canberra rally in July. This provided an opportunity to meet other activists, attend workshops and the rally itself at Parliament House.

August - Nationwide March for Palestine in Hobart

As part of a nationwide rally to condemn the crimes of Israel and support the Palestinian people, Tasmanian Palestinians Advocacy Network (TPAN) organised and galvanised approximately 5000 people, many from other parts of the state, to take to the streets and march to Franklin Square to hear a range of speakers outline the emergency in Gaza, the illegality of the occupation, the genocide and starvation and demand action from the Australian Government. FOPT President spoke at the end of the march along with a range of other speakers.

September - 'Never Again' – the abomination of genocide in Gaza a talk by Tim McCormack, Professor of International Law at UTAS and Special Adviser on War Crimes to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague from 2010 to 2024. This talk was recorded and is available on YouTube. This event was jointly presented with **AIIA** (Australian Institute of International Affairs - Tas Branch).

November - Amnesty International, Quakers Tasmania, International Commission of Jurists Australian Section and Friends of Palestine Tasmania: worked jointly to present **Professor Chris Sidoti**, in conversation with Andrew Wilkie at the Hobart Town Hall in November. The topic was *“The State of Israel bears responsibility for the failure to prevent genocide...Why Australia must act to prevent ongoing genocide in Palestine.*

Chris Sidoti is an expert member of the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory. His UN Report determined that the grounds for determining Israel was committing genocide in Gaza could be found. Chris outlined the key findings and the grounds for the Commission’s decision, based on international law and human rights laws and international conventions. Chris outlined his 20 Point Plan about what Australia could do now under international obligations and within the law to bring more pressure on Israel to adhere to and be accountable under international law, human rights laws and International Conventions.

The event was chaired by Andrew Wilkie. Other speakers included **Madeline Habib**, a Tasmanian who is the Captain of the Conscience, part of the Freedom Flotilla attempting to break the siege on Gaza by providing medical and health supplies. Madeline and her crew were arrested and imprisoned in Israel by the IDF. Madeline spoke of her experience, why she does what she does and of her ongoing support for the people of Gaza.

We also welcomed **Dr Ahmed Hassan**, a specialist physician from Burnie Hospital who had recently worked in Gaza with Islamic Relief Association. Dr Hassan spoke of his work in Gaza, the devastation he found and the trauma experienced by those civilians who require health and medical care. Donations and ticket sales available after meeting costs were distributed to MSF (Doctors Without Borders), Olive Kids and PANZMA.

Following the event, a dinner was held in Tasmanian Parliament House for 30 people, including Independent and Green members of State Parliament, and Ella Haddad from Labor. Also in attendance were a number of human rights lawyers, church and other community leaders and the event provided opportunities to make new connections.

Again a special thank you to David Hook for his organising and bringing this event together and to Robert Alcock and Alex Soras who did a marvellous job recording Chris’s talk in 4 parts and posting it on YouTube for general viewing.

Chris Sidoti’s 20 Point Plan is available to help us set a pathway for future events and actions.

November: RUN FOR Palestine

Another successful annual event with approximately 50 people participating to run/walk around Wharf area and Salamanca Place. Again the event was supported by TPAN who also provided the marshals for the morning. Strong donations and sales of Keffiyehs. Thanks to Phillip Hoysted and Robin Tidale, Shiraza Jaldin who put in a great effort to organise much of the event. Funds raised were shared with Olive Kids Australia, an Australian charity providing services for children in Palestine.

November - Tassie Dads- Run Bruny Island Ultra for Palestine

In November this group participated in the Bruny Island Marathon and raised nearly \$6,000 for the Palestinian Australian New Zealand Medical Association (an organisation sending doctors and medical equipment into Gaza. Bruny Island and Gaza are roughly the same size, around 360

km. We thank Alexander Humphries and his many friends who organised this and who continue to be active supporters of Palestine and to raise community awareness.

Activities around the State

FOPT is pleased to support, wherever we can, the growing activities around Lutriwita/Tasmania. Friends of Palestine Devonport has been working hard to raise discussions on Palestine, despite considerable opposition, there is growing activity in the Meander Valley and of course we continue to admire the work of Launceston for Palestine in creating events.

We ended the year with much achieved, and much more to do informed by the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry into Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the finding of credible genocide being committed in Gaza by Israel, the recognition in September by Australia of the independent and sovereign state of Palestine, a highly successful march as part of the Nationwide event and undoubtedly considerable support and enthusiasm for the movement by the broader community in Tasmania.

All events were good fund raisers for our primary organisations working directly in Gaza – Olive Kids and PANZMA. Kufiyas made in Palestine were regularly sourced from Kufiyas Australia, based in Melbourne and sold easily throughout the year as we replenished our stock.

All this progress seemingly has been overtaken by the terrorist attack on December 7th in Bondi and the consequent response by governments. While this attack remains a terrible event in Australia the politicisation of the attack and the linking of antisemitism to the peaceful and democratic rights of Australia to protest Israel's genocide and illegal occupation of Palestine has been unrelenting. Encouraged by powerful and influential leaders and politicians and mainstream media the result has been the introduction of draconian and undemocratic laws and regulations. Our PM invites to Australia a man opposed to a two state solution of any kind, cited by the UN for credible evidence of his enabling of genocide. He heads an apartheid, genocidal and criminal state that is deliberately killing women and children and breaches numerous international laws and decisions of the UN. In Australia, his so-called healing visit allows him to clearly speak blurring the distinction between Jews and the State of Israel.

This puts at risk not only the valid protesting against Israel, but also freedom of speech, assembly and the vulnerability of the legitimate claims of the pro-Palestinian movement and its supporters. Professor Ben Saul (Sydney University and UN Special Rapporteur of Human Rights and Counter Terrorism commented about the new laws pointing out that 'domestic rights have been suppressed by illegal laws and aggressive policing, and NSW is now one of the most draconian anti-protest jurisdictions in the democratic world.'

Thank you.

A special thank you to two retiring committee members.

Robert Alcock who provided strategic thinking, energy and skill especially with his film making, capturing guests including Chris Sidoti and Greg Barns – all available through our website or on YouTube. He also put together some extraordinary films/documentaries that were shown both in Hobart and Cygnet. Robert and his wife Fiona are active members of the Cygnet for Palestine Collective that provides a rich opportunity for the Cygnet community, and others, to attend films and cultural events educating us about Palestine. Robert will be missed but his contribution continues.

Tom Leydon (our FOPT North and North West Convenor) has moved to the Northern Territory. His work keeping supporters in the north and north west engaged and supported was greatly appreciated. There is a small group of FOPT in Launceston and in Devonport and scattered across the north of the State. Tom and his wife Valentina were central to a number of significant events over the years including Walking Gaza in Penguin, and a seminar that had front page coverage in the Examiner! Tom provided a regular inspiring and reflective blog and connected those of us in the south with dynamic people and activities in the north and north west. We look forward to continuing to build these relationships.

To **Jo Errey** our constant and passionate Facebook manager and poster. Jo captures news and stories far and wide and is a must read daily. **Laura Cope** posts important events and happenings on Instagram, and **Robin Tindale** works on our website.

Michael Lynch our wise and diligent Treasurer and thanks to our other committee members **Phillip Hoysted, Ann Hughes** and **David Treanor**.

Thanks also to Launceston for Palestine, TPAN in Hobart and Launceston, Friends of Palestine Devonport, and Launceston, and Meander Valley for Palestine as well as to active individuals across the state. Together we work to make sure the voice of Palestinians is heard.

Thanks to Andrew Wilkie, and his staff, for ongoing support throughout the year, providing us with a regular meeting room, hosting and speaking at events here and in Canberra, as well as speaking out in Parliament. Thanks also to Nick McKim and office staff for support in the generous printing of material.

Peta Fitzgibbon

President

February 2026

Friends of Palestine Tasmania Inc.

Treasurer's Report – 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025

Presented to ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 21 FEBRUARY 2026

INCOME

Memberships: \$625.00

Donations:

General: \$6155.00 (including \$3750.00 for Mercury advertisement)

National Day of Action - \$426.00

Nakba - \$117.00

Events:

AGM Sales and Donations - \$251.00

Film Event Sales and Donations - \$770.00

Tim McCormack Event Sales and Donations - \$312.00

Chris Sidoti Event – Registrations, sales and donations - \$940.54 (Eventbrite) and \$5551.15 (including 50% reimbursement from Amnesty for airfare)

Run for Palestine - \$1235.00

Kufiya Sales: \$1600.00

TOTAL - \$17,982.69

EXPENDITURE

Transfer to Olive Kids, PANZMA (Palestine Australia & New Zealand Medical Association) and MSF (Doctors Without Border)- \$2843.66

Transfer to APAN - \$1000.00

Transfer to PANZMA - \$1100.00

Transfer to TPAN – National Day of Action Donations - \$500.00

Memberships:

- APAN (Australia Palestine Advocacy Network) - \$200.00
- MCOT (Multicultural Council of Tasmania) - \$30.00

AGM expenses:

- Venue Hire - catering etc - \$175.00,

- Annual Return Fee - \$74.80

EVENTS:

Chris Sidoti Event:

- Venue Hire - \$623.00.
- Audio - \$150.00
- Dinner - \$195.00
- Accommodation - \$250.00
- Airfare - \$854.40

Run for Palestine

- Police Permit - \$49.66
- T-Shirts - \$610.50

SOHO Arts Venue Hires — \$110.00 and \$77

Cygnnet Film Night:

- Advertising Southern Business Services - \$65.80

Mercury Advertisement:

- Design and Layout - \$200.00
- Mercury Advertisement - \$2775.22

Website expenses: GoDaddy - \$382.31

Purchase Square Reader - \$65.00

Purchase Banners and Badges - \$621.00

Purchase Kufiyas - \$2002.80

Transfer to APAN – Disappearing Palestine Flyers - \$400.00

Convergence Rally Canberra Airfare - \$800.00

TOTAL - \$16155.15

CARRIED FORWARD - \$3262.90

BALANCE - \$5090.44