

BRIAN TORPEY: HEADMASTER 1962 - 1967



Brian Joseph Torpey was born in Carlton in 1911, so he was Australian by birth but Irish by background. His parents were Patrick Joseph Torpey and Irene Gertrude Conroy. The Torpey heritage goes back to 1836 in Loughmore, Co. Tipperary, Ireland. The Conroy heritage goes back to 1800 in Wicklow, Ireland. Patrick and Irene married in Melbourne in 1908 and raised six sons and one daughter. Brian Joseph was their second son, born in 1911. He might have finished some of his education at the Austral Coaching College in Collins Street Melbourne, and then studied for Bachelor of Arts at Melbourne University in the 1930s. In 1936-37 he was staying at the Victoria Hotel while teaching in Korumburra, Gippsland. He completed his B.A. Degree in 1939, and his Diploma of Education probably through the Melbourne Teachers College.

Brian Joseph Torpey married Marie Carmel Feain in 1943. She was also of Irish background with her family being traced back to 1820 in Limerick, Ireland. Brian and Marie raised two daughters and a son. They established their home in Auburn, Chisholm, and lived there for decades.

Torpey started at St Albans High School in 1962 and stayed until 1967, after which he was appointed headmaster of Mt Waverley Secondary College.

Brian Joseph Torpey passed away in 2004 at age 92 and was buried at Kew. Marie Carmel Torpey nee Feain passed away in 2009 at age 89 and was buried at Kew.



Mr Torpey and teaching staff 1962.

Headmaster's Message

At the end of the School year, now that the examinations are over and most of you know the results, how many of you can say that you have done your best? Very many pupils do not make sufficient use of their abilities and so fail to reach the standard that they are capable of attaining. In this respect, my most ardent desire is that all of you will firmly resolve that, when you return to school next year, you will make full use of The opportunities available at the school.

Parents expect that their children will leave the school with qualifications in the term at a certificate: for the gifted, matriculation to enable them to enter a course at the university, if they

are so inclined; for others, qualifications to enter industry, business or commerce. Most parents rightly expect much more than this. The home and school must endeavour to develop the child into a responsible person, stable and self-dependent, an individual with a mind of his own and the courage to accept its conclusions, so that he or she will become a good citizen prepared to serve the community.

In order that these qualities may be developed more fully, there must be a close link between the home and the school; teachers and parents are mutually dependent; and, being mutually involved in the task of developing the personalities of the pupils, there is a constant need for parents to be aware of school activities, both in the classroom and outside it.

At all times parents are welcome in my office, and, where requested, interviews with teachers may be arranged by appointment.

I extend to all, Christmas greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

B. J. Torpey, B.A., Dip.Ed.
1962



Mr Torpey and teaching staff 1967.

Activation Program at St. Albans High School, 1961

This is a program designed to meet specific problems encountered within the school and beginning at the Form V level. The chief problems were a poor general attitude in Form V, a below-average test rating in all forms, and an over-all lack of parental knowledge, in part arising out of language difficulties.

The approach to these problems was made through pupils, parents, and staff, with skilled help from the Psychology and Guidance Branch, the initial efforts being made with Form V. Early in April, tests revealed that 21 out of 30 pupils were failing to reach a satisfactory standard. An appeal was made for the fullest effort; a questionnaire covered the pupils' approach to work and the cultural conditions within the faintly; the staff undertook to supervise all private study periods; and a parent-teacher meeting was held to discuss pupils' problems.

By the end of May, more parents and pupils were seeking guidance. In association with the program, prefects, the social service league, and the Students' Representative Council undertook greater responsibility. By October the tone of the form was vastly improved.

As it became apparent that other pupils would also benefit from the activation program, extensions were undertaken. In all cases appeals were made for maximum pupil effort: school counselors undertook to give advice to each pupil prepared to take advantage of the offer; and parents were invited to meet at the school. Special programs were carried out in the fields of guidance and counselling; of understanding, reading, and writing English; and of personal behaviour and attitude to work.

Final assessment of the program can only be made after six years, when it has been applied throughout the school life of one generation, but the results in intangible fields are already felt to be worth while. The general opinion of the staff is that all the work has been worth while and that the program should be continued. The head master (Mr, Max Wilkinson), his staff, and the officers of the Psychology and Guidance Branch are to be commended for their valuable experiment.

Extract from Report of the Minister of Education for the Year 1961-62.

Brian Torpey 1968, headmaster of Mt Waverley Secondary College.



(L-R) Brian Torpey, Peter Tatchell, Meg Oakden, PTA Chairman.

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This article is taken from the Headmaster's Message in Alba 1962.