'The Voice' workshop provided me with so much new insight into creative writing. The workshop was an incredible opportunity to write freely in a secure, collaborative environment. The workshop leader, a published poet in America, made time to conference individually with each of us, allowing us the opportunity to develop our pieces and manipulate our ‘creative writing voice.’ Participating in this Day of Excellence was a thoroughly enriching experience, for which I am very grateful.

Clare Ryan Year 10

Don’t Go
Don't go. War is a lion constantly pouncing.
War is a thorn bush hurting everyone in its wake.
Don't go. War is a diamond it can never be destroyed
War is a fire burning and destroying.
Don't go. War is a dark cloud signifying the worst us yet to come.
War is a clock ticking further and further to the end.
Don't go.
War is here.
Men leave.
Boys leave.
You stay as the war ticks on.

Above is an extract from my metaphorical poem about war. I believe that the Days of Excellence was an overall success as I learnt many different skills that I had not known before and was able to extend my writing skills by performing free writes and experimenting with dialogue.

By Rachel Shoshani

Dying World
By Ella Hambleton

I remember an ocean storm, electric waters reaching for the hidden moon.
I remember watching wisps of white swim across the sky, eagle’s wings diving in and out of their foggy depths.
I remember rushing streams, their race shaded by oaks and elms.
The romp of dingoes under curling gums.
Royal manes, shimmering feathers, gleaming black claws.
I remember when the world was green.

That was then.
Now cumbersome toads squirm through sludgy marshes.
Long dead mangrove roots protrude, like wooden needles,
daring any creature to venture over the violent mud
now brown smog tumbles like a tired acrobat
and rises to smother the sun.
Now there are no sparrows, flashes of red in the rafters.
No predatory growls rustling through long grasses

Acid has replaced rain.
Lifeless dirt has replaced soil.

And while the human empire becomes stronger,
our dying earth disintegrates beneath our feet

Soon there will be no place to call home.

My involvement in The Voice days of Excellence was an insightful and enjoyable experience that I will not soon forget. The workshop focused mainly on character development, dialogue structure and the expansion of our writing abilities. I focused largely on my poetic skills, and the discovering of my own style. During writing time, we were given freedom to either follow the stimulus given or to work on an unprompted piece, as long as we kept our pen moving. The poem above is a second draft of the product of my first free write, the stimulus being “I remember”. One tip I would have for any new writers is to use your first idea. It doesn’t matter if it seems bad initially, just keep your pen moving and something will happen, you can always come back to it later. I was very successful with this technique, and am extremely proud of all of my workshop creations. Personally, I found the whole experience very enriching, and would highly recommend it to any budding poets or creative writers!