The overall standard of Intermediate Creative Writing entries was very high in 2013. Forty-seven entries were received from students at nineteen schools across Victoria, and a judging panel of six teachers assessed the entries. The four ‘A Century of Australian Science’ topics were equally popular. It was very inspiring reading the entries on ‘Australian Science, the sky’s the limit’, ‘Necessity was the mother of invention’, ‘Australian Science, below the surface’ and ‘So it began, the start of an Australian Science legend’. Nearly all entries were able to gain a Merit Certificate, if they did not achieve a Major or Minor Bursary. Major and Minor Bursary winning entries shone with an appropriate amount of accurate and relevant scientific content integrated into original and creative stories. As well, entries were neatly and legibly presented with attention paid to spelling, grammar, tense and word length. The best stories had clear expression, an introduction that held the reader’s attention, several paragraphs that logically developed the main ideas and a satisfactory conclusion. Some stories did not quite fit the word length and were either under or over the seven hundred to one thousand words allowed. Other stories were factually correct, but the writer needed to include some more key ideas. In this year’s stories, the cast included William Lawrence Bragg, Sir Howard Walter Florey, Professor Graeme Clark, Professor Fred Hollows, Dr Fiona Wood, Lawrence Hargrave, George Nicholas, Dr Carl Wood, Sir Ian Clunies Ross, the CSIRO, Australian environmental pests, the bionic ear, desalination, penicillin, Aspro and IVF.

Five Major Bursaries of $60 and ten Minor Bursaries of $40 were awarded. The topic ‘So it began, the start of an Australian Science legend’ was chosen by four of the Major Bursary winners for their exceptionally good work. The judge’s attention was held from the first paragraph of Year 10 student from Kolbe Catholic College April Hawksworth’s writing. She loved the creative format chosen by April of a letter and journal entries about the discovery of Zircon at Jack Hills, Western Australia, and a geologist and professor’s quest to outdo his colleague and find an older crystal. April’s story was well concluded in the final paragraph, which tied it altogether, and contained some solid scientific ideas. Matthew Sievers, a Year 9 student from Macedon Grammar School, wrote an interesting story in the first person as Stuart Thomas Butler, an Australian Nuclear Physicist describing nuclear stripping reactions to an audience of university students. Also on the same topic was the inspiring and emotive writing of Bridgette Van Diepen, a Year 10 student from Nossal High School. Her key ideas were cleverly and coherently worked into her story about the work of Fred Hollows, which was written as a conversation between a child and her aunty in remote Australia. Meric Oz, a Year 9 student from Cheltenham High School, wrote a very interesting and informed story, using clear expression and fluidly integrating the science. Meric wrote in the first person as an individual who receives a cochlea implant directly from Laureate Professor Graeme Clark. ‘Australian Science, Below the Surface’ was the topic chosen by Victoria Sadler, a Year 9 student at Doncaster Secondary College. Victoria cleverly managed to integrate scientific knowledge into writing that was almost pure dialogue – a valiant effort, for which she was awarded the fifth Major Bursary. The scientific ideas that Victoria presented were also impressive. Her bibliography followed all the STS Handbook Guidelines, including the date and time of access for Web resources, as well as the name of the
article/source and the URL address. Victoria’s story focused motivating a student towards a future career in Marine Science.

Thank you to our judges for their assessment time and comments, including “Your story was inspiring and sounded very heartfelt and passionate”, “your piece captured my imagination”, “you write really well and have given a good account of some fantastic Aussie innovations”, “the strength of this piece of writing is the strong grasp of scientific ideas that it portrays”, “you made your characters very believable”, “very creative!” and “I like the way you incorporated the science into a personal piece”.

Well done to all the 2013 Creative Writing – Intermediate section authors on your efforts and congratulations to all who achieved Bursary and Merit Awards.