ST GEORGE & SUTHERLAND SHIRE Leader

Former MP turned poet Barry Collier honoured in collection to mark 100th anniversary of Henry Lawson's death

By Murray Trembath

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Barry Collier with the poetry collection published to mark the 100th anniversary of Henry Lawson's death. Picture by Chris Lane

Two poems by former Miranda MP and Sutherland Shire councillor, Barry Collier have been included in a collection of contemporary poems inspired by the work of Henry Lawson.

The collection, titled *Beyond Lawson*, was compiled by The National Henry Lawson Memorial and Literary Society and released on September 2, along

with a commemorative medallion, to mark the 100th Anniversary of the writer's death.

Commemorative medallion marking the 100th Anniversary of Henry Lawson's death. Picture supplied

In an introduction, the society's president James Thomas said each of the works selected for the 120-page collection had been written "by some of Australia's best-known bush and traditional verse poets" in response to one of Lawson's poems and short stories.

Mr Collier's poems are titled, *Let us also Remember* and *Millennium Drought*. *Let us also Remember* was reprinted by the *Leader* ahead of Anzac Day, 2018. The poem focuses the harsh reality of War for "those at home and those left behind."

Mr Collier, OAM, has read the poem at numerous Remembrance Day events in the Sutherland Shire, including the unveiling of the council plaque in Miranda commemorating the end of World War I, and at the 2021 Anzac Dawn Service in Caringbah.

Millennium Drought responds to Lawson's poem *Drought Stricken*, written 100 years earlier and includes a reference to climate change, something unheard of in 1900.

"Written in rhyming and free verse, all poems in the collection are easy to read with meaningful messages and observations on life to which we can all relate- things often not found in many of today's poetry offerings," Mr Collier said.

"Henry Lawson is rightly called 'The People's Poet' and it is so important that we keep his work alive.

"I congratulate The Henry Lawson National Literary Society on this initiative, providing as it does a wonderful tribute to the work of a great Australian."