



# Pemulwuy

Newsletter of the NSW AECG Inc.

June 2020

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## Zoom Classes



Have your say

## Want to have your say?

Let everyone know the great things happening in your Local or Regional AECG. To be published, send your photos and stories to: [info@aecg.nsw.edu.au](mailto:info@aecg.nsw.edu.au)

The NSW AECG Inc. would like to Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, and pay our respect to Elders past and present.

## President's Message



Welcome to the June edition of Pemulwuy, the newsletter of the NSW AECG. We have been living in some challenging times with bushfires, drought and now a health pandemic. It has been challenging both from a personal level for many and an educational level as we continue to try to keep students connected to learning.

The NSW AECG has attempted to assist and support students, their families and communities by providing back to school basics for families affected by bushfires, running classes over zoom to engage students in learning and keep them socially connected and providing essential packs needed for studying at home. It has certainly been a challenging time.

As educators, even during a health pandemic, education is at the forefront of everything we do. Our talented staff recorded songs with important health messages and have put together stage appropriate activity booklets around feeling deadly and reinforcing those important health messages of washing hands and social distancing.

Our other challenge has been to adapt to the use of technology in delivering professional learning and conducting meetings so the work of the AECG continues. But adapt we have, as together we continue to strive to make a difference in educational outcomes for our children.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Pemulwuy!!

## Pemulwuy

Pronounced: "Pem-ool-we"

The newsletter has been called *Pemulwuy* in honour of one of the first Aboriginal people known to have resisted the invasion of Australia.

*Pemulwuy* and his son, Tedbury, were both outlawed while leading resistance to the invasion for 20 years after 1788. They led a form of guerilla warfare right around the area of modern Sydney and were perhaps the first Aboriginal people to resist attacks on their culture and identity.

# AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS:

## Harold Davis – 2/32 Battalion, Australian Infantry. WW2



<https://pixabay.com/photos/poppy-poppy-flower-flower-nature-4897641/>

**Warning:** *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following article may contain images and or voices of people who have died.*

The 2/32 Battalion saw intensive action against Hitler's Afrika Korps and Mussolini's Army in the critical Battle for El Alamein during WW2 in North Africa.

It was during a night attack on Axis Forces that Australian units were dealt a counter attack and become surrounded by enemy tanks and were captured and held as Prisoners of War.

These prisoners were later sent to POW Camps in northern Italy. This included Harold (Harry) Davis, an Aboriginal man from Western Australia. His records state he escaped captivity from a labour camp in Vercelli on 10.9.43 and stayed in the mountain areas joining the Partisans and fight a guerrilla war against the German occupying forces. Locals kept him in hiding with food and clothing. Harold and his mates were then to survive more than 2 years behind German enemy lines, with the assistance of a number of Italian partisans. Harold eventually made his way to safety in Switzerland, and traversed the Italian Alps in the process, which according to Italian locals, was an incredible feat of endurance.

After the War, Harold completed reports for the Australian Army in which he stated the following information: - *"The General living conditions in the Camps were affected by wooden bedding, fair lighting, and poor heating and very crowded. Rations were insufficient, of poor quality and cooking facilities were poor. In Udine they were successfully receiving Red Cross comfort parcels. The Internment Staff were strict, but fair. The ordinary Italian soldiers were alright but the fascists were apt to be a bit too strict"*.

Harold was recovered and deplaned in the United Kingdom on 30 June 1945. He returned to Australia on 21 September 1945 and was subsequently demobilized with an Honorable Discharge on 6 November 1945.

In correspondence from the Central Army Records Office, Albert Park Melbourne on 18 July 1955 written to the

Commissioner of Native Welfare, Perth, the following Campaign Stars and Medals were awarded to Harold Reginald DAVIS, but he had never claimed them:- 1939/45 Star, Africa Star, Defence Medal, War Medal, Australia Service Medal. The District Officer, Narrogin of the Department of Native Welfare acknowledged in a letter dated 8 March, 1956 that Harold has now collected his Medals and Awards.

Harold is buried in an official Australian War Grave in the Bunbury General Cemetery (WA) located in the Methodist D Section at Plot No.16.

Of the many men and women who enlisted in the armed services during World War 2, there were also Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who signed up. Their roll is not complete and probably never will be. Enlistment papers usually carried no reference to race. Many enlisted under false names and places of birth in order to avoid the provisions of the *Defence Act* or the unwanted attention of Protectors of Aborigines. Many oral histories of those who served may have been lost as a result.

**Lest We Forget.**



### References:

Australian War Memorial  
Escape Artist by Peter Monteath  
National Archives of Australia  
<https://bunburywarheroes.com.au/davis-harold-reginald/>

# Faster than a Bark Canoe

## Aboriginal Crew in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race

The glistening waters of Sydney Harbour in December are generally calm and are populated with all sorts of sailing pleasure craft, ferries and other vessels and below the water line, a variety of marine life exists. The shoreline is filled with expensive real estate and at times interspersed with sections of National Park. In some of these areas, Aboriginal engraving sites indicate the evidence of longevity our peoples have had in this area. A fine harbour indeed.

On Boxing Day of each year, the harbour is especially crowded with the start of the annual Sydney to Boxing Day sailing race. This year, Tribal Warrior Organization set out to challenge sailing stereotypes, entering the first all-Indigenous crew to race the Sydney to Hobart yacht race. On board was Naomi Cain, whose only previous experience sailing was operating cranes at Port Botany docks. The 40-year-old Aboriginal woman might not be a seasoned sailor, but she's right at home on the wharf. *"I've been working down at the ports for the past 18 years as a wharfie, so in and around the water but definitely not anything like doing the Sydney to Hobart,"* Cain said.

There have been Aboriginal sailors who have competed in the Sydney to Hobart, with a



number sailing on board One Time Sidewinder in the 1996 edition of the race. But the idea of an all-Indigenous crew is the brainchild of skipper Wayne Jones, who has been competing alongside Indigenous sailors since the 1960s.

The Tribal Warrior is named after the Tribal Warrior Aboriginal Corporation, a maritime training program mentoring young Indigenous people at risk. The crew consists of Aboriginal people from Wiradjuri, Yuin, Eora, Gadigal, Bidjigal, Gomeroi and Gamilaraay nations.

The program has been running on Sydney Harbour for 20 years and aims to reduce recidivism rates in jail and strengthen family relationships and cultural ties.

Well over 200 years ago, it was the nawi or bark canoe that plied these same waters of Sydney Harbour. Agile craft constructed from materials from local Country, they plied the various inlets and coves quietly but with purpose. They just did it at a much slower and calmer pace than the Sydney to Hobart yacht race.

**References:**  
Daily Telegraph  
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-24/meet-the-first-ever-indigenous-crew-to-race-the-sydney-to-hobart/11815428>

**NSW Bark Canoe**  
Source: Australian Museum



# Local Schools Decisions

## NSW Audit Office Report on Local Schools Local Decisions: Needs based equity funding

### NSW Audit Office Report on Local Schools Local Decisions: Needs based equity funding

For more than five years the NSW AECG has advocated in response to very concerning issues regarding implementation of Local Schools Local Decisions reforms in NSW schools. In April 2020 the NSW Auditor General's Office released its report on the NSW Department of Education's oversight of the reforms, specifically around accountability arrangements and support for schools. The reports major findings are very disappointing and reflect the concerns we have long expressed around implementation of Local Schools Local Decisions in NSW schools. The Executive summary and recommendations of the report are provided below.

#### Local Schools, Local Decisions: needs-based equity funding Executive Summary

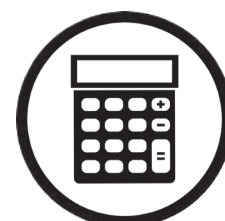
The Local Schools, Local Decisions reform was launched in 2012 to give public schools more authority to make local decisions about how best to meet the needs of their students. A major element of the reform was the introduction of a new needs-based school funding model. Core elements of the model address staffing and operational requirements, while needs-based elements reflect the characteristics of schools and students within them. This includes equity funding designed to support students with additional needs. The four categories of equity funding are:

- socio-economic background
- Aboriginal background
- English language proficiency
- low-level adjustment for disability.

Around \$900 million in equity funding was allocated in 2019. School principals decide how to use these funds and account for them through their school annual reports. The Department of Education (the department) supports schools in making these choices with tools and systems, guidelines, and good practice examples.

The objective of this audit was to assess the department's support and oversight of school planning and use of needs-based funding under the Local Schools, Local Decisions reform. To address this objective, the audit examined whether:

- effective accountability arrangements have been established
- effective support is provided to schools.



## Conclusion

The department has not had adequate oversight of how schools are using needs-based equity funding to improve student outcomes since it was introduced in 2014. While it provides guidance and resources, it has not set measures or targets to describe the outcomes expected of this funding, or explicit requirements for schools to report outcomes from how these funds were used. Consequently, there is no effective mechanism to capture the impact of funding at a school, or state-wide level. The department has recently developed a consistent set of school-level targets to be implemented from 2020. This may help it to better hold schools accountable for progress towards its strategic goal of reducing the impact of disadvantage.

A significant amount of extra funding has been provided to schools over recent years in recognition of the additional learning needs of certain groups of students facing disadvantage. Under the Local Schools, Local Decisions reform, schools were given the ability to make decisions about how best to use the equity funding in combination with their overall school resources to meet their students' needs. However, multiple guidelines provided to schools contain inconsistent advice on how the community should be consulted, how funding could be used, and how impact should be reported. Because of this, it is not clear how schools have used equity funding for the benefit of identified groups. School annual reports we reviewed did not fully account for the equity funding received, nor adequately describe the impact of funding on student outcomes.

To help in the transition to greater local decision-making, the department provided extra support by; establishing peer support for new principals, increasing the number of directors, developing data analysis and financial planning systems, targeted training and showcasing good practice. Multiple roles and areas of the department provide advice to schools in similar areas and this support could be better co-ordinated.



Financial planning systems designed to help schools budget for equity and other funding sources were not fit-for-purpose when originally introduced. Schools reported a lack of trust in their budget figures and so were not fully spending their allocated funding. Since then, the department developed and improved a budgeting tool in consultation with stakeholder and user groups. It provided extra funding for administrative support and one-to-one training to help schools develop their capabilities. Despite this, schools we spoke to reported they were not yet fully confident in using the system and needed ongoing training and support.

## 1. Key findings

### **The department has not clearly communicated the objective of equity funding**

The department describes the overall purpose of equity funding as 'providing support to address the additional learning needs of students'. Some guidance material directs schools to target equity funding for the benefit of particular student cohorts. Other guidance directs schools to use equity funding to support school strategic directions. In practice, strategic directions do not always align with the additional learning needs of equity groups. This means funding may not be targeted toward improving the educational outcomes of equity groups to meet the intent of the funding.

### **Further work is needed to account for the impacts of equity funding**

Since equity loadings were introduced in 2014, the department had not set performance measures that track progress for all equity groups. It has recently developed a set of targets for its business plan that are reported to its executive. These include targets to improve educational outcomes

for Aboriginal students and students from a low socio-economic background. Greater executive oversight of performance measures for these two equity groups is a positive development which should allow for management intervention and greater accountability.

Up to 2020, there were no consistent school-level measures towards the goal of reducing the impact of disadvantage. The department is introducing school-level targets from 2020 but progress is not planned to be publicly reported. At this stage, the only mandatory target for equity groups is to increase Year 12 attainment for Aboriginal students while maintaining their cultural identity.

The total amount of equity funding provided to schools increased by \$258 million between 2015 and 2019. To improve accountability for this considerable investment, the department should determine suitable targets for all equity groups at a state and school level that consider a wide range of student outcomes. Performance against these targets should be publicly reported.

### **Expectations for the level of community consultation are unclear**

Decision-making that meets the needs of local communities is a key principle underpinning the Local Schools, Local Decision reform. The range of guidance material produced by the department to support schools does not always set out the extent of community engagement expected when making decisions about the use of equity funding. Guidance ranges from suggesting schools inform the community of decisions to involving them in shared decision-making. The lack of clarity means the level of community consultation may depend on a principal's interest and capability in engaging with the broader community. Further support on effective strategies could be offered in this area.



### **School reporting focuses on describing activities funded rather than the impact achieved**

Reporting on the expenditure of equity funding and the impact achieved was of variable quality in school annual reports we reviewed. There were significant discrepancies between equity funding received and what schools reported against each equity category in several schools. Few schools described a measurable impact on student outcomes. Most schools we reviewed simply described the range of activities that provided support for the targeted group of students.

### **Principals report a need for ongoing support for school planning and budgeting**

The department offers a range of support to schools in planning and budgeting. This includes guidance materials, programs to strengthen school leadership, additional funding, professional learning, advice, systems and tools. Support through professional learning and advice is spread across different areas of the department and could be better coordinated.



Despite the support provided, there are indications that gaps remain. For example, a 2019 department survey found that 39 per cent of principals reported a need for support in developing the school plan. The same survey found that 32 per cent of principals reported a need for support in managing school resources but 17 per cent of these reported they did not receive any support in this area. Regular principal turnover also means that continued support is required.

### 3 NSW Auditor-General's Report to Parliament | Local Schools, Local Decisions: needs-based equity funding | Executive summary

#### Ongoing attention is needed to improve capability with using financial planning tools



Budget management tools introduced in 2014 were not fit-for-purpose, causing significant frustration for schools. Schools we spoke to reported in past years they did not trust the accuracy of figures in these tools, which may have contributed to schools not fully spending their allocations. A new financial planning tool was introduced in 2018 and was accompanied by a one-to-one support session to help schools understand how to use the tool. This training received positive feedback in 2018 and 2019 but some schools we spoke to still report the financial system is overly complex.

Directors, Educational Leadership (DELs) play an important role in ensuring principals comply with the department's accountability requirements. To ensure effective oversight of school financial requirements, DELs need to have sufficient capabilities in reviewing school financial plans. DELs we spoke with were uncertain about their level of capability in financial oversight and how they would effectively discharge their responsibilities in this area. The department has identified a need to build the capability of DELs in financial oversight and has recently established a team to support DELs with regular school monitoring of finances.

## 2. Recommendations

**By April 2021, the Department of Education should:**

1. Clarify the objective of equity funding and update guidance material and reporting requirements to consistently reflect this objective.
2. Better integrate equity funding into school planning and reporting by:
  - a) supporting schools to set consistent measures and targets for improving educational outcomes for each equity group
  - b) providing schools with a four-year projection of funding for each equity group based on past enrolment trends
  - c) supporting schools to implement effective strategies for community engagement on the development of the school plan priorities
  - d) requiring schools to identify how they plan to use available funding sources to meet the additional learning needs of identified equity groups and the outcomes expected
  - e) requiring schools to report on how they have used funding to meet the additional learning needs of identified equity groups and the outcomes that have been achieved.
3. Measure and report on school and student outcomes achieved as a result of equity funding on an ongoing basis.



4. Identify schools that have made significant and sustained improvements for specific equity groups and share better practice approaches for using equity funding.
5. Identify schools that have not met expected growth for equity groups and provide tailored advice and support on effective approaches to lift performance.
6. Strengthen guidance on implementing cost-effective and educationally sound interventions that target the learning needs of equity students. For example, by expanding upon the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation's 2015 'What works best' publication and incorporating additional evidence.
7. Better coordinate support provided to schools on community consultation, strategic planning, resource allocation and strategic financial management.
8. Improve training and support to lift the financial management capabilities of school principals, business managers, and Directors, Educational Leadership.





*NSW AECG supporting on-line Learning*

# ZOOM CLASSES

The NSW AECG, in partnership with Connected Communities, are offering learning opportunities via Zoom classes to keep students engaged in learning, and socially connected during Covid-19 restrictions.

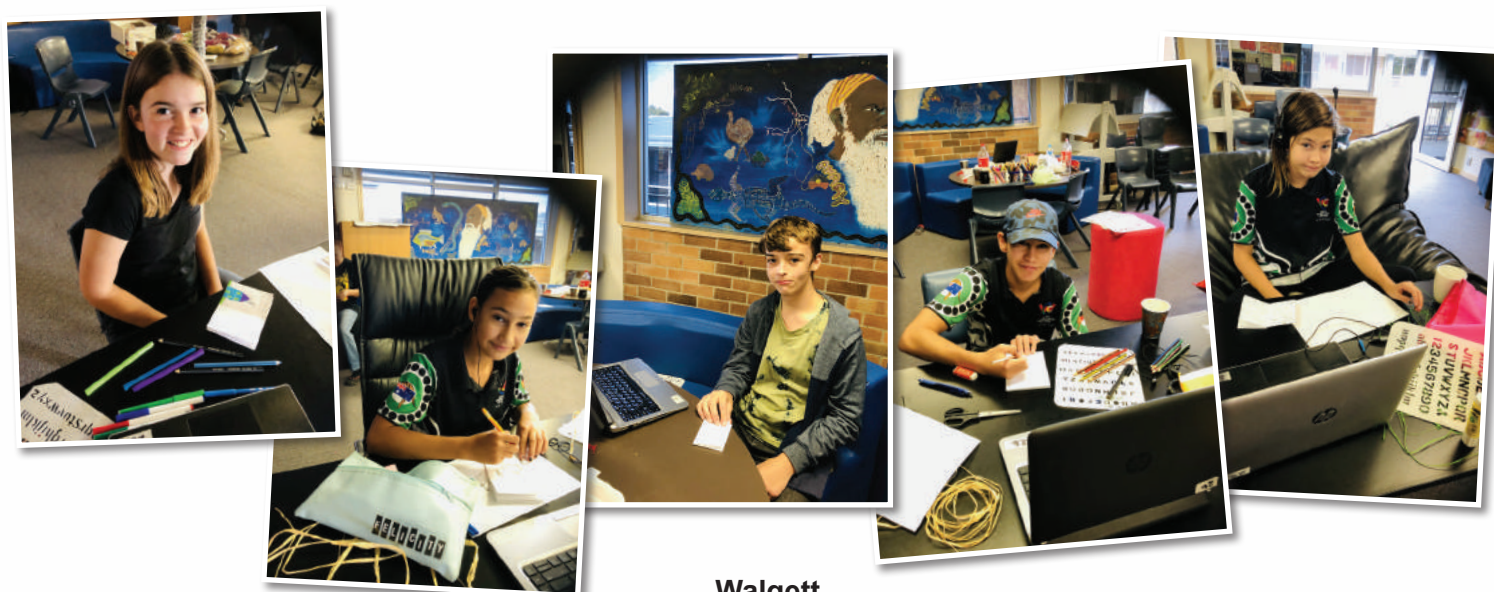
The recent changes to students learnings have been a challenge to students, schools and now parents and careers, so the NSW AECG have developed some 'face to face' learning (over Zoom) for students to engage in over this time.

Students from Walgett Community College and Collarenebri Central School spent two days at the end of term 1 engaged in classes that offered learning in the art of weaving, Zine making as an art activity and making a RAP song as part of a music class. Students enjoyed the classes as did the NSW AECG staff who delivered them.

We are hoping to offer more as an additional engagement learning opportunity. For more information, please contact us at [info@aecg.nsw.edu.au](mailto:info@aecg.nsw.edu.au)



Collarenebri



Walgett



Coalition  
of Peaks

# Coalition of Peaks



We are proud to be a member of the Coalition of Peaks – a representative body of around fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak organisations and members.

We came together as an act of self-determination to be formal partners with Australian governments on Closing the Gap to improve the life outcomes of our people across the country.

The Coalition of Peak members have their own unique histories, needs and priorities, and share a commitment to legitimate community-controlled representation of our communities on matters that are important to our people. We are accountable to and work for our communities in every state and territory and at the national level.

More information can be found at: <https://coalitionofpeaks.org.au/>

# Information Sheet

## Cultural Engagement and Goal Setting Program

Pirru Thangkuray  
Dream Strong



The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) have developed and is implementing a Cultural Engagement and Goal Setting Program 'Pirru Thangkuray'. The program is designed to align with the Premiers Priority in increasing the number of Aboriginal students completing their HSC, whilst maintaining their cultural identity. To support schools in achieving this, Aboriginal students studying in Years 8-12 are eligible and invited to participate in the program.

The model has been developed using direct engagement with Aboriginal educators and Aboriginal community to encourage students to fulfil their goals and aspirations. *Pirru Thangkuray* provides support in sustaining educational outcomes for students through the delivery of Aboriginal perspectives and culturally appropriate content.

### What is the purpose of the program?

The program is designed to be engaging, fun and support Aboriginal and other school students build their self-esteem, self-confidence, cultural identity, sense of well-being and realise their academic potential.

### What will the program consist of?

The program will be conducted both in and out of school including after school and school holiday activities. Our program has six stages:

1. Goal setting
2. Personal development
3. Academic Goals
4. Family
5. Culture
6. Identity and Belonging



### Who can attend?

Our target group is Aboriginal students, and non-Aboriginal students who are members of the Junior AECG, and studying in Years 8 to 12.

### How can I send a student to the program?

Parents, families, schools, Aboriginal Education Officers and other Aboriginal staff can nominate students for the program through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. We encourage students to nominate themselves by speaking to their family, school, Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO), local AECG or by completing an EOI themselves.

### What do I need to do?

Request an EOI form or forward student details and following information: to the details below:

1. Name, address and contact details for the student including parent/carers contact
2. Person nominating or supporting the student, relationship to the student and commitment to supporting the student's involvement in the program, if appropriate
3. A brief explanation of how you think the student will benefit from being involved
4. Aboriginality; or length of membership of Junior AECG (for non-Aboriginal students).

# Snapshots

## from across the State



Earlier in the year Secretariat staff were guest teachers in the Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 classes at Newington College teaching the Aboriginal perspective on Cook's pacific voyage.



Also from earlier on in the year - some snaps from our Regional Presidents Workshop.

# Snapshots

## from across the State



Our Language Educators recording some health songs that you can find on our YouTube channel:

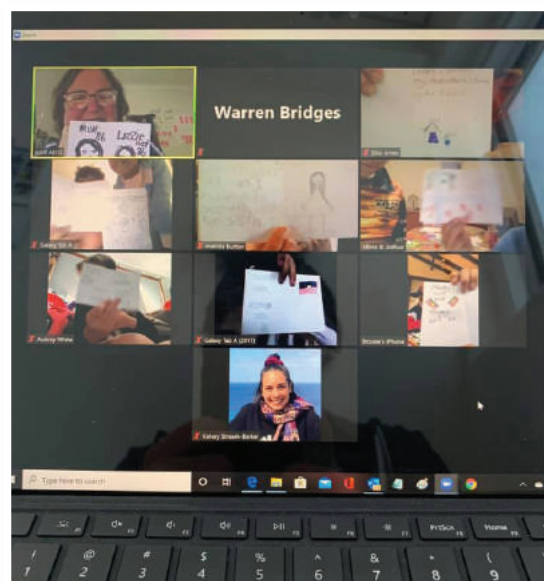
<https://youtu.be/IL5c9yQpdds>  
<https://youtu.be/AkwPPRey1SE>



Some wonderful artwork for Reconciliation Week by the Principal from Kambora Public School.



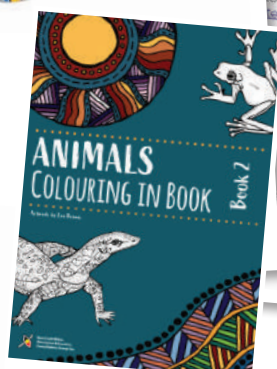
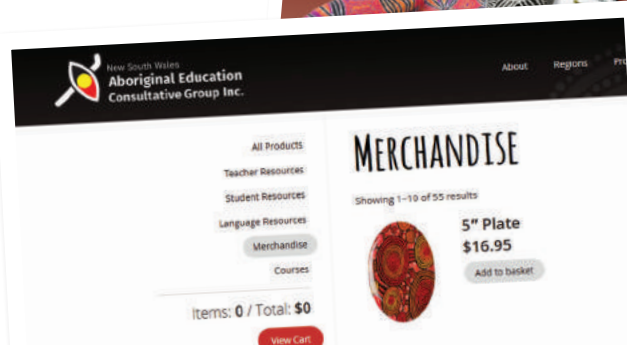
Some happy little faces from Nyngan Local AECG with their essentials packs.



Students showing off their artworks from our Zoom Art Class.

Are you looking for  
the perfect gift?

Looking for some gift ideas? We now have a variety of merchandise items for sale on our website. Head over to check them out: <https://aecgservices.com.au/product-category/aecg-store/merchandise/>





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 AECG App |  AECG Languages App

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