Nine Northern Territory schools have been awarded a share of $40,000 under the Artists in Schools (AiS) program, Employment, Education and Training Minister Syd Stirling announced today.

The program aims to enrich school arts programs in the Territory, with the grants allowing schools to engage professional artists.

The Department of Employment, Education and Training and the Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs have jointly funded the program, contributing $20,000 each.

Mr Stirling said artists work with teachers, students, parents and the wider community on projects designed to inspire creativity and foster all forms of art.

This year’s projects include circus theatre and a sensory garden.

“The program provides students with new learning opportunities, giving them hands-on experience with different forms of art and allowing them to participate in the creative process,” Mr Stirling said.

“They are able to explore new ways of seeing, learning, understanding and creating. Not only are students learning to be creative, it also helps them academically by getting them to think in different ways.”

One of the schools taking part in this year’s program, Moulden Park Primary School at Palmerston, has musician James Mangohig visiting during August to conduct a music, popular culture and literacy project.

Moulden Park Principal Greg Jarvis said James was introducing Years 5, 6 and 7 students to popular culture and was assisting them to write songs.

Schools have until June 2005 to complete their projects.