Teachers around the Territory are undertaking Professional Assault Response Training (PART) to assist them in responding to aggressive behaviour, Minister for Employment, Education and Training Syd Stirling said today.

More than 130 teachers, principals, assistant principals and specialist staff workers have undergone the two-day PART course, with the number expected to grow to about 300 by the end of the year.

Mr Stirling said it was decided in July last year to train teachers in handling aggressive behaviour as part of an approach to developing a co-ordinated community response to aggression management.

"DEET, health workers, police and key Arnhem communities agreed that appropriate actions should be introduced to reduce the incidence of aggression towards government staff in remote communities," he said.

"The course is based on similar courses held throughout Australia, and also in the United States, Canada and England.

"It is a total preventative program. Teachers and staff are taught the appropriate, non-threatening ways in which to minimise the threat of violence or aggressive behaviour. It develops confidence and gives staff and schools an emergency response plan to deal with situations in a calm and controlled manner."

Mr Stirling said the first course was held in Darwin in June last year. Others have been held in Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy, and further courses are planned for Darwin, Alice Springs, Palmerston and Katherine during the next three months. Teachers and departmental staff from urban, remote and rural schools take part.

Mr Stirling said the course covered legal issues, stress, developmental issues, communication, environmental issues, basic needs and socio-cultural issues.

"Most of the course is theoretical but learners also take part in practical, role-playing sessions in which they learn evasion and communication techniques to defuse a threatening situation.

"The feedback we have had already from people attending the course has been extremely positive. Government and non-Government schools are keen to be part of future sessions."

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