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## Northeastern rising Down Under

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Marcus Breen is the chair of the Melbourne-Boston Sister City Association.

#### January 7, 2010

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Northeastern faculty member Marcus Breen, an Australian who chairs the Melbourne-Boston Sister City Association, sees a big future Down Under for the University's faculty and students.

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Northeastern's joint degree program with Swinburne University in Melbourne and other initiatives in Australia — ranging from traditional study-abroad programs to internships and research co-ops — position the University to take advantage of a new partnership between Massachusetts and the state of Victoria, says Breen, an associate professor of communication studies.

The Massachusetts Office of International Trade and Investment recently signed an agreement with the Victoria Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, promoting bilateral trade and investment as well as information and academic exchange.

Melbourne, Victoria's state capital, is "considered to be the cultural capital of Australia, and the educational center as well," Breen says. Australians tend to be very outward looking and creative, he added, and he expects that creativity to mix well with Northeastern's brand of experiential and global education.

"We already have a well established partnership with Swinburne, which is going very well, and there are so many other great academic institutions, including the University of Melbourne, Monash University, and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology," he says. "My ambition is to have some formal interactions with universities there, while developing project-based activities that will be supported by participants on both sides of the planet."

With the official agreement between Massachusetts and the Victoria, Breen anticipates additional resources will be allocated to forge collaborative ties in a number of industry and research sectors, including clean/renewable energy, financial services, communications, technology and life sciences, he says.

"There is a great deal of nanotechnology research taking place in Australia, and I see this as an area of big potential for collaborations," Breen says. "Both states are deeply committed to technology and environmental science and want to enhance the interaction between all stakeholders."

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