



 [Print this article](#)

[Close This Window](#)

Sydney university stem cell ban sparks academic row

Mon Feb 5, 2007 8:55 PM ET

SYDNEY (Reuters) - An Australian university has agreed not to conduct stem cell research in a new medical center to be built on land bought from a Catholic college, sparking criticism the deal undermines the freedom of academic research.

The University of Sydney sealed a deal on Monday to purchase land from a Catholic residential college to build a A\$350 million (\$270 million) medical research center.

The agreement prevents the university conducting embryonic stem cell research in the new center or "any other procedures involving the termination of human life or the artificial creation of human life".

"We, as a Catholic college, have a problem with termination of life, abortion and euthanasia," St John's College Rector David Daintree told the Australian newspaper.

The university's vice-chancellor, Gavin Brown, told local media the college had originally wanted a wider ban on all research contrary to the ethical beliefs of the Catholic Church.

Brown said the deal would not prevent embryonic stem cell research elsewhere on campus. "The conditions were purely a question of where certain things would be done, not whether they could be done," Brown told local radio on Tuesday.

"We're not actually stopping any university activity but we're respecting some other people's principles," he said.

But the university's student union and the Greens political party criticized the deal as restricting academic research.

"This damages all universities because it undermines the very important principle of freedom of inquiry, freedom of research," said John Kaye, the Greens' education spokesman in New South Wales state.

"It places on record the idea that one group can dictate with their prejudices what can and cannot be researched at an Australian university," Kaye said.

(\$1=A\$1.29)

© Reuters 2007. All rights reserved. Republication or redistribution of Reuters content, including by caching, framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Reuters. Reuters and the Reuters sphere logo are registered trademarks and trademarks of the Reuters group of companies around the world.

[Close This Window](#)