It has been proposed that a perpetual biennial lecture be established in the name of Sir John Downer at the University of Adelaide, in recognition of the Downer Family’s impact and influence on the South Australian political scene.

The presenter of the prestigious Downer Lecture is to be selected with a view to recognising and complimenting the views and ethos held by Sir John Downer, in particular his role as Premier of South Australia (1885-87, 1992-93), as Senator for South Australia (1901-03), and for the key role he played in the debates in the 1890s that led to Federation. The theme of the biennial lecture will be based around securing a high profile, significant presenter (likely to be from a conservative political background or able to speak from this perspective) to ensure a high standard lecture is maintained in order to attract high calibre presenters in future years. The presenter will be selected by the University of Adelaide (with advice from its School of History and Politics) and, where possible, in association with members of the Downer Family.

To ensure the perpetuity of the Sir John Downer Lecture, the Downer Family will source or provide a gift of a minimum of $50,000 to be placed in the University’s Endowment/Composite Fund with a 5% interest drawdown every 2 years to allow $5,000 per Lecture to be provided to cover or support the costs associated with travel and accommodation for the Downer Lecture presenter.

An official invitation from the University’s Vice-Chancellor and President will be sent to the identified presenter, once an initial approach and indication of interest has been obtained.

The University of Adelaide, in association with its School of History and Politics, will undertake all arrangements for the visit, and will involve the University’s Media Department and Development and Alumni in ensuring that maximum publicity and attendance can be obtained. The opportunity to “stream” this biennial Lecture to the University’s global alumni will be considered for each Lecture, with advice and input from the University’s Development and Alumni staff.

The Sir John Downer Lecture will be presented as a prestigious event with appropriate VIPs, political leaders and key University Senior Staff invited to attend. A private dinner, hosted by the University, will be offered to the presenter and the Downer Family following the Lecture.

The inaugural Sir John Downer Lecture is planned for September 2012, with the Honourable John Howard AC as the presenter.

Guidelines established August 2011