Background –

A. Dame Roma died on 5 March 2000 and under the terms of her Will dated 5 February 1998 bequeathed one part of the whole of the rest and residue of her estate both real and personal to the University to be administered in the following manner:

‘….As to one such part for the UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE to be applied for such purpose as the Council of the University may decide.’

B. Dame Roma Mitchell was a Lawyer and Governor. Born in 1913 in Adelaide, South Australia. Roma Mitchell was the daughter of a solicitor killed in the First World War. Mitchell's mother, who believed in tertiary education for women, put her through a law course at the University of Adelaide during the early years of the Depression. She graduated in December 1934, and the following February began as a barrister with an Adelaide law firm.

C. During the 1930s she did much work in the field of domestic violence. At first, Mitchell says, her main aim was simply to be a good barrister. In 1962 she became the first Australian woman to be admitted as a Queen's Counsel. Then, in 1965, she became a judge of the Supreme Court of South Australia, the first woman in Australia to be appointed to that position. She also led a deputation of women seeking the right for women to serve as jurors.

D. Among other appointments, Dame Roma has been Chairman of the Human Rights Commission, President of the Churchill Fellowship and Chancellor of the University of Adelaide. She was awarded the OBE in 1971 and in 1991 was appointed Governor of South Australia, again becoming the first woman in Australia to hold that post.

E. Dame Roma’s association with the University of Adelaide extended over more than 60 years, as student, lecturer, Member of Council and Chancellor.

F. The University accepted the bequest upon the trusts specified by the donor and the bequest therefore became the capital subject to those trusts (‘capital sum’).

Name of the fund

1. The capital sum, all income arising from the capital sum and any accumulations and additions thereto together form a fund called ‘Dame Roma Mitchell’ (‘fund’).

Investment of the fund

2. The fund is to be amalgamated for the purposes of investment, and held in a common fund, and the net income earned by the common fund shall be credited, rateably, to the funds so amalgamated and thereafter distributed according to the trusts specified by the donor.
Obligations

3. In administering the fund, the University must adhere to the terms specified and is obliged:-

   (a) to invest the capital sum according to the directions of the donor; and

   (b) to apply the funds in the manner described by the donor.

Administration

Funds are currently applied towards a Dame Roma Mitchell Chair of Law within the Law School as approved by Council at its meeting on 30 July 2001.