Professor Margaret Alston gives Keynote Address at the recent Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development

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Professor Margaret Alston

Violence against women, employment programs for the mentally ill and environmental disasters were just some of the topics covered by Monash researchers at the recent Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development 2014.

Seven academics comprising over half the Department of Social Work were invited to showcase their research at the Melbourne-based conference, which was attended by delegates from 78 countries.

Only the third of its kind to date, the event was organised as part of a movement to bring together social work practitioners, educators and development workers spanning a range of different professions. On this occasion the theme from the Global Agenda was ‘Promoting Social and Economic Equality: Responses from Social Work and Social Development’.

Professor Margaret Alston presented the opening keynote address looking at the social and gendered impacts of climate and environmental disasters and how social workers can respond.

"The economic focus, in Australia at least, has led to a highly politicised debate about taxation options, completely overshadowing the significant social issues and the scale of human suffering,” Professor Alston said.

Over the four days, Professor Alston’s colleagues Dr Melissa Petrakis, Associate Professor Fiona McDermott, Dr Deborah Western, Associate Professor Rosemary Sheehan and Dr Catherine Flynn all presented in their areas of expertise. Dr Western also spoke on behalf of Dr Uschi Bay.

Higher Degree by Research students also presented and social work students volunteered at the event, making it a great opportunity for teachers, researchers and students to come together on such important issues.