

while setting out new plans. The flood recovery comes first, of course. Canberra has a big funding challenge ahead even though the main responsibility for reconstruction lies with the Queensland government.

Healthcare is not listed as a substantial part of the meeting agenda and the prospects for fundamental change in this area are dimming, given that Western

The government believes it can get an outcome in its talks with the Greens and produce a major economic change that counters those who think Labor has no bottle. But

Gillard, on the other hand, has an incentive to outline a substantial plan that resets the agenda after the mixed results of her first six months as Prime Minister.

What does federal Labor stand for? What does it want to achieve? Does it have the gumption to impose reform despite resistance?

But Gillard's message is likely to be that she expects her government to get on with its wider agenda regardless.

A Coalition victory in NSW could further cloud the vision for national

patchy media performance during the Queensland floods and giving

Two items that Gillard did not mention on Wednesday, the mining

Gillard is preparing to use speeches and other events over the next weeks to outline some of her thoughts, although how and when she does this will depend on whether things improve in Queensland and

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Management must change to lift productivity

The key to productivity growth is locked in the mindsets of Australian leaders and managers, writes Steve Vamos.

Improving Australia's lagging productivity performance has been back in the spotlight following Productivity Commission chairman Gary Banks' statements on the subject late last year.

Knowledge of our workforce, and to make our organisations more environmentally and financially sustainable. Challenging reforms

gains can only be realised if we get serious about raising the standards of leadership, culture and management practices in every Australian workplace.

Bank's statement that in the context of improving productivity, industrial relations regulation "is arguably the most crucial to get right", supports the view that regulatory frameworks are an important part of the mix. Just how much of the mix is questionable.

Increased promotion and adoption by government of policies and practices that build leadership, culture and management capabilities across all workplaces.

Engaging for Success report, "sets out for the first time the evidence that underpins what we all know intuitively, which is that only organisations that truly engage and inspire their employees

At the International Industrial Relations Congress held in August 2009, Prime Minister Julia Gillard (then Deputy Prime Minister)

Evidence of the need to lift our leadership and management standards is clear when you consider the results of a Gallup Consulting survey conducted during 2009 which suggested that about 80 per cent of people in Australian workplaces are not "fully engaged at work".

The information and communications technology boom of the 1990s, which wired our now highly connected and fast-changing world, enabled much of the productivity gains achieved in the past two or three decades.

Collaboration (forums and online community) involving government, business, unions, academics and practitioners, as government alone can't "fix this".

Improvement in national productivity requires us to adapt our leadership and management mindsets to those that better suit the realities of a highly connected and fast-changing world rather than the hierarchy and silos of the industrial age in which they are largely still rooted.

Communication with staff and external stakeholders must be continuous.

The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report (2009-10) shows that when benchmarked against other nations, Australia lags many of its peers in areas such as business management and innovation.

Similarly, the next wave of significant productivity gains will not be brought about through regulation alone.

The time is right to establish a highly collaborative nation-building focus on the systemic change and the organisational leadership mindset shift needed at workplace level, across all sectors, if we are to drive the next wave of productivity gains.

This new leadership mindset puts the job of aligning and enabling the people of the organisation around a clear, common purpose at the very top of priorities - a mindset which recognises that mistake aversion stifles any hopes of innovation and that communication with staff and external stakeholders

stated that "to truly unlock the productivity of our nation... we need workplace leadership and the requisite cultures and skills that will build upon the foundations of the Fair Work Act to encourage innovation, employee engagement and co-operation in our workplaces".

These challenges include the need to increase innovation, create more diverse and inclusive workplaces, better integrate and leverage technology at work, better utilise existing skills and

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