Unions need fresh air of competition

Paul Keating's first major speech of his second term as Prime Minister, delivered at Newcastle, New South Wales, included a call for a more vigorous approach to union reform.

"It's a change of pace," he said, "and a change of strategy.

The Prime Minister said he was prepared to consider "major changes" in union policy, but he refused to speculate on the nature of these changes.

"I think it's time for us to take a fresh look at the problem of unionism and the way in which we deal with it," he said.

Mr. Keating said he was willing to consider any proposals that would help to improve the efficiency and productivity of the nation's workforce.

"I believe that the union movement has a vital role to play in our economy," he said. "But it must do so in ways that are consistent with the needs of the nation as a whole."