

## Fed DVA secretary heads off for new job

Department of Veterans Affairs secretary Mark Sullivan is to take on a new job as chief executive for Canberra water utility company ACTEW.

Mr Sullivan, who has headed DVA for the past four years, said he informed the board of ACTEW he would take the job on Friday evening and handed in his resignation to the Rudd government on Monday.

Mr Sullivan rejected a Liberal senator's suggestion he was getting out because of government budget cuts to DVA.

"I have never run from a challenge in my life," he told a Senate estimates committee hearing.

"There is an implication in that question which I don't appreciate.

"It is 25 years ago almost today that I first appeared at an estimates committee in respect of the then government for the Special Broadcasting Service.

"I have been through changes of government. I have been through 1996 cuts to a portfolio I represented. I have been through this change of government. That challenge is a challenge I would have warmly welcomed."

Senators paid tribute to his long contribution.

"He is very highly regarded by the veterans community and we wish him well in his future career," Liberal senator Mathias Cormann said.

Another Liberal senator, Ian Macdonald, said ACTEW's gain was our loss.

"I am very sad to see you going from this or any portfolio in government service," he said.

"You leave with everyone's goodwill and congratulations on a job very, very well done."