



Miriam Bobrowski with Kathryn Ball (left) and Polly Warburton.

Photo: Chris Ison JL26061J

Getting the message across

STROKE victim Miriam Bobrowski knows what she wants – independence.

It is well-known a vital aspect of independence is the ability to communicate effectively.

So with the help of speech pathologists Kathryn Ball and Polly Warburton, Ms Bobrowski is now closer than ever to achieving the independence she craves.

One in seven Australians are affected by communication disorders, which can be hereditary, occur in childhood or be the result of stroke, neurological disease or injury.

This year Speech Pathology Week ran from July 23 to July 29 and aimed to raise awareness of the important work speech pathologists do.

As Ms Ball, a senior speech pathologist at Ipswich Hospital, pointed out, they do more than just cure stutters and lisps.

One of the most important duties speech pathologists perform is teaching people how to swallow.

It was also vital for doctors to be able to understand their patients' needs as she said treatment was sometimes determined by responses to questions such as 'are you in pain?'

"Speech pathology is all about communication; and generally someone's ability to express themselves," Ms Ball said.

"Children (throw) tantrums when they can't convey the message and adults are the same."

This frustration is something Ms Bobrowski was only too familiar with but said she was happy to take it "one word at a time".

She can now talk, but with difficulty, so was given a Lite Writer; a small typewriter with a moving electronic screen.

"Being an active person like I was it is hard to sit back and watch others do the jobs I did," Ms Bobrowski said.

"I would love to go home and get back to work but I know that is impossible as I cannot walk properly or talk yet. I will one day as I am determined."