



The power of speech

Life changing work of Darwin experts in demand

By **NADJA HAINKE**

ANNE Lynch's eyes light up every time the word "sailing" is mentioned.

The 20-year-old Territorian dreamed of sailing around Australia with her dog Minnie when she was a little girl — a big challenge for someone bound to a wheelchair.

But that didn't stop Ms Lynch from taking up the water sport.

"Sailing is a love of Anne's, taking to the water as often as she can," her former foster mother Judy Hanson said.

"Anne operates the sailboat using a joystick, similar to those on an electric wheelchair.

"Being able to sail by herself gives Anne a wonderful sense of freedom and independence. She can't wait to get the boat out into the ocean."

Ms Lynch, who was born in Alice Springs, has had cerebral palsy since she was seven months old.

The permanent condition has paralysed most of her body and impaired her speech.

Ms Lynch may still be unable to express herself if it wasn't for an expert team of speech pathologists in Darwin.

But Ms Hanson said the main specialist, Erin Smart, was set to leave the Territory in September,

creating a local shortage of speech pathology experts.

"We are so grateful to them for helping Anne with her speech and reading," she said.

"Speech pathology has helped Anne to articulate important words — chocolate is one of her favourites. They're not always spoken perfectly but they don't need to be as long as she is understood.

"Some words you can do without, but there are times when you simply need speech."

National Speech Pathology Week — themed Communicate to Participate — will start on Monday.



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WINDS OF CHANGE: Cerebral palsy sufferer Anne Lynch has a new love in her life other than her dog Minnie — sailing. Picture: JUSTIN SANSON.