



Breaking the silence

Rashell Habib

STRATHFIELD'S Faye Yarroll calls herself the bionic woman, having had two cochlear implants.

Ms Yarroll was born with a hereditary hearing problem. Her siblings, parents and grandparents are all hearing impaired, and she has had to wear hearing aids most of her life.

Things became even worse for Ms Yarroll when an accident left her with no hearing in her right ear and only limited hearing in her left.

"For the next 20 years, I lived with a severe hearing loss in my left ear and no hearing in my right ear and no one ever suggested that I might be a candidate for a cochlear implant," she said.

In 2003, she lost most of her remaining hearing. But in March 2005 and April 2007 she finally received cochlear implants.

"Day one was unbelievable. I could hear the birds chirping in the trees, the blinkers clicking in the car and I had no idea that flushing the toilet was such a noisy event!" she said.

"Filling the kitchen sink with water

sounded like Niagara Falls and my little dog's bark was way too loud.

"I have always had a very positive outlook on life. My personal mottos are 'everything is possible' and 'never say can't'. No matter how many hurdles or challenges life throws at me, I always remain positive."

Ms Yarroll said having the implants made her feel as though her life had been given back to her. She was able to regain the independence she thought was lost for ever.

She said a common misconception among the hearing impaired was that cochlear implants were just for babies and children. More than 120,000 adults and children, in more than 100 countries around the world, have the implants.

She said anyone with hearing difficulties should seek diagnosis and treatment and for action on hearing health during Hearing Awareness Week 2009 (August 23-29).

For more information go to www.cochlear.com.au.



Faye Yarroll's life has changed since she received cochlear implants.

Photo: CRAIG WILSON