



# Sex therapist calls for post-prostate help

By Phillip Thomson

Australia's most famous sex therapist, Bettina Arndt, told an audience at the National Press Club yesterday that the Commonwealth must help prostate cancer sufferers make love to their wives and loved ones again. Men and their partners must fight for the "right to an erect penis".

The author flew in to Canberra to talk about her book *What Men Want In Bed*. As it turns out, it's sex, but her 342-page book outlines the numerous obstacles to getting it in the modern day.

Pornography was more accessible and a greater encumbrance to lovemaking.

"[Pornography] has become the bogey man, the red under the bed," the writer said.

"The need for men to look at

pornography can become compulsive."

Twenty-five pages were dedicated to the subject in her book and the social commentator said she had found many women who were not against erotica. They saw it as different from pornography, which they disdained.

The writer, who also wrote *The Sex Diaries*, believed the reason could be found in a quote from Chilean writer Isabel Allende who said, "Erotica is using a feather, pornography the whole chicken."

Most chapters in her book, published by Melbourne University Press, are dedicated to men unable to achieve an erection, particularly because of prostate cancer.

Arndt said that the message doctors gave men recovering from prostate cancer was, "Use it or lose

it."

She said the Federal Government must fund erectile dysfunction treatments, which cost about \$10 an erection, for men recovering from the disease.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia says 3000 Australian men die of prostate cancer each year, equal to the number of women who die from breast cancer annually.

Arndt said the Federal Government had allocated at least \$9 million in 2007-08 for breast reconstructions after breast cancer.

"Men who have prostate cancer are given no government support when it comes to recovering from that cancer," she said.

Arndt asked 150 men to keep a sex diary to help her compile the book.



**DISCREPANCY:** Bettina Arndt says women are helped after breast cancer, but there is no funding for men recovering from prostate cancer. Photo: GLEN McCURTAYNE