

# Energy drinks under review

THEY may give you wings, but Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald wants an urgent review into the levels of caffeine contained in energy drinks.

He has written to the Federal Government requesting tougher laws governing caffeine levels in energy drinks after community concerns about the impact on children and young people.

Mr Macdonald said he had asked for the matter to be put on the agenda at the next Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) meeting.

"I'm concerned that the health of young people is being affected by the over-consumption of these products," he said.

"I will be asking my Federal counterpart responsible for food regulation to urgently undertake a dietary intake



assessment of the short and long-term health and behavioural impacts of these beverages.

"I am urging that there be a thorough review of scientific studies conducted on formulated caffeine drinks since these products became available in Australia in 2001.

"Clearly there are serious concerns in the community and anecdotal evidence about the potential dangers in consuming these drinks, so it's vital we stand back and take a closer look at the scientific facts."

# Stars dazzle crowds at Carthage Festival grand finale

Venezuelan flutist Pedro Eustache and Greek composer Yanni were among the top-tier artists to close Tunisia's 45th Carthage Festival, which showcased local and international talent.

Tunisia's international music showcase, the Carthage Festival, wrapped up Monday (August 17th) several dazzling weeks of performances by world-renowned artists such as Cheb Khaled, Venezuelan flute prodigy Pedro Eustache and soundscape pioneer Yanni.

Riad Fehri, a Tunisian star who heads the Sidi Bou Said Music Institute, crowned the closing acts of the festival, now in its 45th year, with his piece "Red Carpet".

"The title is inspired by the Tunisian flag," said Fehri, who earned Arab musical heritage awards for his body of work, which includes favourites like "Al Manarah", "Al Burj" and "Riyah 330".

"The carpet extends from Tunisia to receive the world," added the artist, who counts the Vienna Symphony Orchestra among his collaborators. "Tunisia welcomes foreigners and has honoured a number of artists."

The night got rolling, appropriately enough, with Amin Triter's "The New Beginning". Besides the works by Fehri and Triter, a Tunisian living in the United

States, the audience heard 13 compositions before the event was over. In all, 80 performers of 10 different nationalities took part in the grand finale, lending the music a truly international flavour.

"The best thing about the [Carthage Festival] is the cultural diversity and engagement of young people, which has been very clear to everyone during this year's performances," said audience member Ibrahim.

"In my opinion, [this year's festival] fulfilled its promises, at the top of which is granting Tunisian artists the status they deserve," said festival head Boubaker Ben Faraj. "This show is the best proof of that. It shows that the festival is receptive to other cultures and civilizations."

The festival, the oldest in the Arab region, opened on July 9th with an operetta celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Abou El Kacem Chebbi, the renowned Tunisian poet. The schedule also encompassed Tunisian luminaries like singer Lotfi Bouchnak, who enchanted the audience with favourites like "Nassaya". The Carthage Festival is part of an ambitious round of

300 cultural events Tunisia scheduled this summer in order to highlight the arts.

While the works of Fehri and Triter received prominent play this year, flutist Pedro Eustache was undisputedly the star of the concluding evening, together with platinum-selling Greek star Yanni.

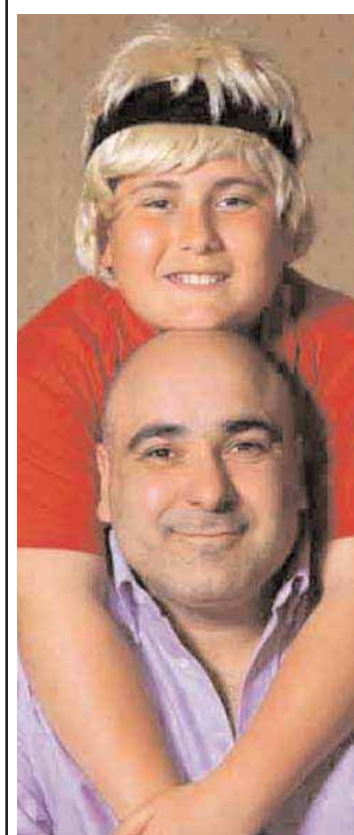
In the course of the evening, Eustache wowed the audience by performing on virtually every wind instrument known to humankind, winning thunderous applause.

"The show was exceptional," one audience member told Magharebia. "Pedro gave it a special flavour."

Performers brought audience members together when a group of Tunisian and Ethiopian children took the stage for a song called "Children of the World". Other selections included "A Mysterious Journey", "Do Si" and "Anstrouss", all of them blends of classical and modern Arab and Western music. Artists from Italy, the Netherlands, the US and Iraq took part.

And while the Carthage Festival may be nearly half a century old, it still has some surprises up its sleeve. This time, it was revered Tunisian musician Saleh Mehdi, who suddenly appeared on stage and performed, for the first time, a piece he composed over 45 years ago.

Mehdi offered three Maghrebi takes on the muwashah, a rhythmically complex musical form originating in medieval Spain, all of them celebrating the concepts of love held by Sufi mystics. "In love, I am a miracle worker," ran the lyrics of one muwashah. The artist described the music as bringing together all of the Maghreb's states — reflecting the Carthage Festival itself.



## Bantam goes (a little bit) Greek

Britain's Got Talent contestants Stavros Flatley will be up against even fiercer competition than Susan Boyle this Christmas as the duo contend with publishing heavyweights, with a hardback book from Bantam.

How To Be (a little bit) Greek by Stavros Flatley will be published on 8th October, priced £9.99. The title will explore ways to become a little bit Greek from eating Greek (by consuming as many calories as possible), to exercising Greek (with the Zorba workout) and practicing the art of seduction with a chapter on 'How Greek is your love?'

The father and son duo, Demi and Lagi Demetriou shot to fame on this year's Britain's Got Talent with their Greek/Irish dance routines. They came fourth in the final episode, which was watched by 17 million people.

The book will also feature photographs of Stavros Flatley's Greek heroes and include illustrations of how to spin plates, make kebabs and Irish dance (Greek style).

