

After fleeing Ukraine, Kseniia hopes to follow in her parents' footsteps

By Alyssa Talakovski, Sydney Morning Herald, 18 December 2024

Two and a half years ago, 18-year-old Kseniia Vereshchak and her family fled the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian war and arrived in Australia.

Located right on the Russian border, her city, Kharkiv, was one of the first cities to be attacked.

From fearing her safety and having to start anew, Kseniia said she “was really anxious” in the week leading up to the results.



Kseniia, with her parents Igor and Alyona, wants to study civil engineering and hopes to follow in her parents' footsteps by eventually pursuing business. *Credit: Louise Kennerley*

“I couldn't go to sleep. I didn't want to face my result,” she said.

Kseniia, who was awarded a scholarship to Pymble Ladies College after attending an intensive English centre, said she's “quite happy” with her ATAR close to 80.

Her top scores were a band five in design and technology, followed by a high band four in maths advanced and a high band three in physics.

“It’s such an amazing opportunity with English being my third language,” she said. “My parents were in a bit of shock to start with.”

Her family was thrilled and relieved that she can remain in Australia and continue her studies, she says.

With a conditional offer to UTS civil engineering, she hopes to follow in her parents’ footsteps by completing a bachelor’s degree and eventually pursuing business.

Her advice for other students whose first language isn’t English: “don’t be scared and don’t be nervous about making mistakes ... I’ve made plenty.

“Just study and do as much as you can.”