

To the Australian people, thank you from all Ukrainians

[Vasyl Myroshnychenko](#), Ukrainian Ambassador, Sydney Morning Herald/The Age, October 31, 2022

Beatrice is a 19-year-old Australian university student. She has no family ties to Ukraine and has never been there. Last weekend, Beatrice attended a rally outside Sydney Town Hall and sent a message of solidarity to the people of Ukraine and their defenders. She did it in the Ukrainian language she has learnt over the past eight months.

Since I arrived in Australia earlier this year as Ukraine's ambassador, it's been extraordinary to meet so many decent Australians like Beatrice who have chosen to support Ukraine and the democratic values it stands for. I think it's those values – which Aussies sometimes call the “fair go” or standing up for your mates against bullies – that bring Australia and Ukraine together across a vast geographical distance. From your leading politicians to everyday people I have met at footy matches and in pubs, your warmth, your positivity and your moral support are inspiring.



Ukrainian ambassador to Australia Vasyl Myroshnychenko is grateful for Australia's support during the Russian invasion. CREDIT: ALEX ELLINGHAUSEN

We Ukrainians – whether it's the combat soldier in a Bendigo-built Aussie Bushmaster near Kherson or his wife and kids temporarily sheltered in Molong, near Orange – truly appreciate everything you do for us. Thank you.

For example, we took great heart when Prime Minister Anthony Albanese recently visited Kyiv in the middle of the war. He and I shook hands on the Kyiv plaza where Ukrainians fought for democracy in 2014 – which was followed by Russia illegally invading and annexing Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine.

And, we deeply appreciate the practical assistance Australia has provided – whether it's helping our refugees fleeing Russia's violence or it's helping us end that violence via military aid. Australia is rightly called Ukraine's greatest non-NATO ally.

Russia's eight-year-old war against Ukraine has reached a new point. On the one hand, with support from Australia and more than 50 other countries, our armed forces have been liberating towns that, since February, were brutally occupied by Russian forces. On the other hand, faced with defeat, a desperate Putin and his sycophants have launched an unprecedented "missile mania" against Ukraine's civilians. It's the largest bombing in Europe since World War II with some 200 missiles and some 50 kamikaze drones ([purchased from the dictatorial mullahs of Iran](#)) fired on some 15 Ukrainian cities in the past two weeks.

In my home town, Kyiv, the playground where my wife and I used to take our kids was levelled by a multimillion-dollar rocket fired from a battleship. Since February, such weapons have destroyed hundreds of Ukrainian hospitals and schools. It's cowardly, bizarre and barbaric.

This escalation is why Ukraine's allies need to double-down now. There is a window in which to act. The chances of Ukraine defeating Putin on the battlefield are better than ever, but so are the chances of him unleashing more savagery. We've come to the moment where we have to work together as never before to resolutely remove the risk to not only Ukrainians but the West and return to peace.

It's Putin's war that is driving up petrol prices and the cost of living across the globe, including Australia. It's Putin's war that is creating food shortages in the world's most vulnerable countries for the first time since the 1980s. It's Putin's war that is leading to nuclear threats we haven't seen since the 1960s. It's Putin's war that blocks progress on issues such as global climate change.

Stopping Putin's war starts a better era of democratic rule and economic stability. Australia – both in practical terms and with its undeniable "soft power" – can continue to be a leader in this regard.

In particular, I am grateful to the federal government for listening to Ukraine's requests for an extra 30 Bushmasters (which now have legendary status in Ukraine) and deployment of up to 70 ADF personnel to the UK to join a multinational training effort. This will contribute to Ukraine's defence capabilities and will promote people-to-people bonds, which further strengthen the Australia-Ukraine relations.

A front-line commander in Kharkiv, now liberated, once said to an Australian journalist: "You want to know what war is? It's when you remove everything normal. Your job, your house, your partner, your kids' school concert, your tickets to the football match, your holiday plans ... All we want is to be normal, but some savages have other goals."

I want to be normal again too. Recently, my wife and I took our five-year-old to a petting zoo where he saw the kangaroos and koalas. It was yet another way that your country is amazing – not just for its flora and fauna, but of course its kind and generous people. It's an honour to be among you.

I hope that my people, too, will soon be able to find the same peace that you have here.

In that, we humbly ask for your further help.