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Australia's message of job hope to Ukrainian scientists

After a perilous escape from Kyiv with her nine month old baby scientist Iryna Zaiets this week starts her new job with a Sydney biotech company who wants to hire refugees from Ukraine.



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An extraordinary act of kindness will see Ukrainian scientist Iryna Zaiets begin work in a lab in Lane Cove this week.

Scientists Jennifer MacDiarmid and Himanshu Brahmbhatt, founders of Sydney-based biotech company EnGeneIC, reached out to the Ukrainian Embassy as well as to Australia's Ukrainian communities with the offer of work and sponsorship for scientists fleeing the war-torn country.

"We are in a growth spurt and we are hiring scientists and, when the war happened, we realised that a lot of Ukrainian scientists were being targeted so that really affected us," Ms MacDiarmid said.

"And many of these people were being shipped off to Russia against their will," Mr Brahmbhatt said.

The company is working on a new Covid vaccine as well as cancer treatments.

"There is a very soft side to human suffering and this war affected us straight away," Mr Brahmbhatt said.

"So we thought we'd take the plunge and offered full employment to any Ukrainian scientist who fits in this category of biotech and lands in Australia as a refugee."



Ukrainian refugee Iryna Zaiets begins work next week at EnGeneIC in Lane Cove. Picture: Richard Dobson

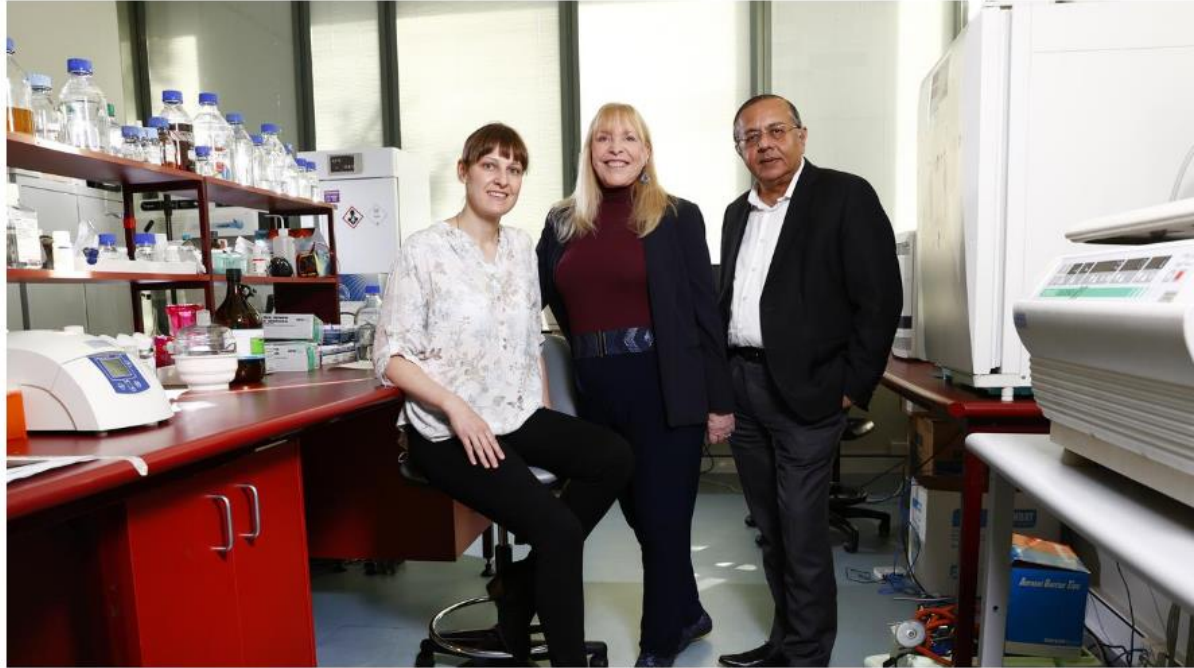
Olha Lyeskakova, who migrated to Australia in 2014, saw the post from EnGeneIC and got in contact because her sister, scientist Iryna Zaiet, 36, had just fled to Poland with her mother and nine-month old baby.

“She is a biotechnology engineer who worked for a pharmaceutical company. I sent Iryna’s CV,” she said.

Ms Zaeits’s perilous journey out of Kyiv took 30 hours. With her mother and baby she crossed to Poland, farewelling her husband who had to stay to fight. She did an online interview with EnGeneIC from Poland and landed the job.

Ms Zaeits arrived to greet her sister in March.

“I am happy, but I am scared, everything will be in English and I’m not very confident in English,” she said through her sister. “This is a great opportunity and I still can’t believe it is happening ... four months after the war started, this is the best thing that could happen in the circumstance, that I could come to Australia as a professional,” she said.



Ukrainian refugee Iryna Zaiets (left) with joint founders of EnGeneIC Jennifer MacDiarmid and Himanshu Brambhatt.
Picture: Richard Dobson



Ukrainian refugee Iryna Zaiets (centre) with founders of EnGeneIC Jennifer MacDiarmid and Himanshu Brambhatt.
Picture: Richard Dobson