LESSONS LEARNT: Masad Alfayadh has had a tough life, but you wouldn't know it. The Roxburgh Park student has received the Isik College Dux award with an ATAR of 99.8 and a leadership and excellence award from Broadmeadows state Labor MP Frank McGuire. Masad, 18, left Iraq in the midst of war with her mum in 2003 to join her father in Australia. “The infrastructure of Iraq was totally destroyed. It was getting very violent, everyone’s lives were in jeopardy,” Masad said.

Less than six months later Masad's father Jalal was killed in a car accident. “He just had an immense impact on my life.” She hopes to study medicine and surgery at Monash University. “The memories from that time in war just taught me to keep going because people really need doctors.”

Picture: KYLIE ELSE N2540815