



📷 Ambika Sivan, Nilofer Nezami and Kanmani Barthasarathy are some of the Afghan and Tamil volunteer "health champions". Picture: PENNY STEPHENS

SOUTH EAST

Migrant "Health Champions" show their peers the ins and outs of Dandenong health services

Sam Bidey, Greater Dandenong Leader

August 18, 2017 4:35pm



A GROUP of Afghan and Tamil migrants are volunteering to help their peers access crucial medical services.

Through enliven Victoria's partnership with leaders from these two communities, 11 volunteer "health champions" have been trained to teach community members about health, mental health, child health and development, alcohol and drug use, and family violence.

"It's really improving the community's understanding of how health services work in Australia," enliven refugee health program manager Anna Brazier said.

"How to make an appointment with a GP, how to ring an ambulance and when to go to an emergency department ... build a capacity around making good choices when

it comes to healthcare.”

Ambika Sivan, who migrated to Australia from India 10 years ago said even though her English was very good when she arrived there were still difficulties when it came to accessing health services.

She said the system in Australia was very different to India and she initially didn't know who to get in touch with about certain services.

“I have seen many migrants that come here and they don't know who to ask or where to go to,” Ms Sivan said.

“They are often hesitant because of the language barrier.

“I was looking for an opportunity to be able to help these people and I've found it with enliven.”

For more information on the services enliven offer migrants and refugees visit enliven.org.au/refugee-health/project-overview