

Link to...Household & Personal Aids

Ray Kirkwood has spent his life 'being a part of it'. He played 2nd division football for Hawthorn in Victoria, was secretary to a regional board of education and ran a travel agency for a decade.

After a diagnosis of MS, some things changed, but many stayed the same. Getting about has become more difficult, but he has remained connected to the world and to his community. A descendant of the Victorian Premier George Kerferd, he organises the presentation of the medal at the annual Kerferd Oration. He is involved with the local council as an advocate for accessibility.

He volunteers on a Gippsland University project researching public transport accessibility.

It's safe to say Ray is both very organised and very determined.

He is also one of the very first Australian adopters of the portable travel scooter. Back in the late 2000s there were only a couple on the market. Now there are dozens, designed to cater to all sorts of needs and preferences. But Ray has remained with his trusty Luggie, a little machine that has repaid that trust many times over.

'It's surprisingly robust, and it's small enough that I can go almost anywhere that someone can walk', Ray said.

And the list of places he has gone is certainly surprising. From the snowy Japanese Alps to a lazy Mauritian

Staying connected to the *world*



Ray Kirkwood admiring the Japanese Alps

beach, and just about every altitude in between, Ray has put the Luggie through its paces. Aeroplanes, buses, cruise ships and the car boot – the scooter is manoeuvrable enough, and can fold compactly enough, to handle them all.

But it's on the domestic front that the Luggie truly changes lives. For Ray, it means going to the gym, slipping out the front door for a coffee, or

enjoying the nearby lake. It means his excited grandkids clamouring around as they all shop at the loud Queen Victoria Markets. It means a weekend away with the family at Inverloch, or a sculpture park with a big white monkey, its gravel paths unexpectedly accommodating. It means connection.

As Ray said: "You need to be organised and determined to be a part of it."