

Ben Ashdown

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Co-founded a YC startup (F26) that automated ~\$15M in R&D tax claims — \$100k ARR in five months. Four years at Google: data centre fabric design, then performance engineering for batch data processing spanning ~26% of Google-wide compute.

Work Experience

Jan 2026 - June 2026	Co-founder & CTO ClaimKit (YC F26) • Grew to \$100k ARR within 5 months of founding — shipped MVP and reached first revenue within 2 weeks • Automated the preparation of ~\$15M in R&D tax claims for ~30 companies, including fellow YC startups • Cut claim preparation from weeks of consultant-led work to ~3 hours of customer effort, at 6% pricing vs traditional consultant fees • Personally designed and built the core product on a 3-person team — an orchestration system coordinating specialised agents for document analysis, R&D assessment, and claim writing, processing hundreds of thousands of pages of customer documentation • Solely owned all engineering for the company — MCP and third-party platform integrations, agent infrastructure, cloud infrastructure and CI/CD, cost-optimisation systems, and internal claim-assessment tooling
May 2025 - Dec 2025	Co-founder & CTO Two early-stage startups • Explored two products — legacy-code modernisation tooling and AI project management for Slack — killed both on weak traction
Oct 2021 - May 2025	Software Engineer Google — Flume Efficiency • Improved efficiency of Google's generic batch processing library (Flume), with a focus on accelerator performance — the library accounts for roughly 26% of Google-wide CPU, 20% of RAM and 14% of Disk I/O • Created metrics to understand performance of the system on Google's latest gen TPUs • Alleviated slow model loading onto TPUs, delivering multi-million-dollar efficiency savings to Google's Offline Bulk Inference infrastructure. • Discovered and profiled issues specifically related to Accelerated workloads, and undertook several projects to alleviate them, saving millions in compute costs • Discovered and fixed deep technical issues related to Flume running on Google's internal job scheduling infrastructure and how signals are surfaced by internal VMs, recovering significant fleet-wide capacity Software Engineer Google — Fabric Design • Developed the software modelling infrastructure producing build blueprints and traffic simulations to validate every new Google data centre fabric design before physical build - Flexible Apollo NPI – modelled port-level connectivity for flexibly-sized optical circuit switching (OCS) layers, enabling data centres of varying size on shared infrastructure - With one other engineer, owned all fabric modelling for minicluster – Google's small-footprint co-location data centres – including mesh bandwidth augmentation for high-bandwidth ML workloads and port allocations for a new Top of Rack switch variant to alleviate supply constraints
Dec 2020 – Feb 2021	Software Development Engineer Intern Amazon • Built an event-driven notification system for events and maintenance campaigns on AWS (S3, SNS, SQS, DynamoDB), tracking the full notification lifecycle through to resolution

	• Drove design discussions across integrating teams and presented the system to ~30 engineers across sister teams
Jan 2020 – July 2020	Software Intern Deswik Development & maintenance of a .NET based windows application for mine management and scheduling
Jul 2019 – Dec 2019	Technology Intern Accenture Infrastructure & Environments team member Produced options papers for secure and scalable hosting solutions and environment solutions that formed part of an organisational change into containerisation Developed proof of concept applications for containerised development and developer environment infrastructure

Education

2017 – 2021	The University of Queensland Bachelor of Engineering (Software) Honours Class I GPA: 6.6 / 7 Deans Commendation for Academic Excellence (x5) Hawken Scholar
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Projects

2020	Process Isolation in OpenBSD C • Implemented toy “zoning” of processes in OpenBSD. • Processes in different zones could not perform IPC. • Processes in different zones from the user shell could not be seen using utilities such as ps
Jul 2018 – Oct 2018	Spaceport Ai Deep Learning Course Python • Created a character-detection CNN, Dog breed detection CNN, Twitter sentiment analysis RNN
Jul 2018 – Nov 2018	Multiplayer Game Java • Collaborated using Git & GitLab, SonarQube and Jenkins for CI • Worked on Powerups & Combat features, allowing players to collect, store and use powerups • Worked on multiplayer networking, focusing on coordinating UI elements across all players (lobby screen, main game, mini-map, player’s health)
May 2018 – June 2018	Frogger Clone C • Built on an atmega324A and displayed on a red/green led matrix, created a fully functional Frogger clone with buttons/ Joystick/ keyboard/ Seven Segment Display