

# New Member Profile

**VGCSA Trade member:** Ben Gibson  
Owner & Managing Director  
THE TOOLBOX TEAM



## **Tell us about your background in the Industry. How did you start out and why did you choose your career path?**

My working life started pouring concrete at mine sites in the Hunter Valley, NSW. At that stage, I was purely raising money for a car and a surf trip!

My first contact with the turf industry came from a friend who showed me 'behind the scenes' at a few facilities in the US. I was blown away at what went into turf management, the science and complexity. I was doing environmental science at Uni at the time and then started work with an environmental compliance company that was working in the turf industry.

What came from that role was understanding how strongly I was drawn to the industry and the passion of the people within it. Twelve years later and we now have our own company, with many great friends and clients from across Australia and New Zealand.

## **What motivated you to start up your company, The Toolbox Team?**

I get really excited when I see people 'reaching' and giving themselves and their teams their best. From working with teams in the construction, landscape, turf, open space and local government across my career, I felt there was an opportunity for occupational health and safety to be done differently. Embedding it into a team's culture takes it from being 'a chore' and 'something we have to do' to something we proudly

do because it is part of doing things properly and professionally.

I have always felt strongly that teams with a great culture, that communicate well and develop their people, see the bar raise across the board. Things become easier and clearer. Turf quality, safety, environmental management, compliance and other standards all improve as a result.

## **Give us an overview of your company vision and your role as owner**

We are a passionate group of professionals spread across Australia and New Zealand. We are a mix of full-time, part-time and casual. We have Darren in Southern NSW, Peter in Perth, Graham (our IT guru) in Townsville, myself and Stacey in Lake Macquarie (2 hours north of Sydney), Faith in Auckland and are in discussions with a potential team member in Melbourne at the moment!

As per the previous question, our mission is to take safety from being something that sites 'have to do' and embedding it into the Club's values, ethos and threaded throughout their DNA.

My role as owner is to help promote our message, vision and how we feel we can positively impact client facilities.



## **Describe your management style**

Maybe you should ask the team! As the owner of our business, I am so grateful and appreciative of their contribution, I really see my role as working to support them.

We have such an amazing group of people at The Toolbox Team who I work with to help take hurdles out of their way and ensure they have the resources they need to do their job.

I am big on gaining their input and then communicating our shared vision for The Toolbox Team. Clarity and communication is everything for us. All our team work flexibly, in an environment that suits their productivity and lifestyle. Our customer service is shared to provide the best support for our clients and also balance for the team.

I am pretty proud of what we have created and I feel that their passion is evident in our client support and deliverables.

**When did you first hear about the VGCSA?  
What inspired you to join as a member?**

The turf industry is a rewarding, challenging, demanding and at times very stressful career path. The work that Associations do across Australia and New Zealand is really important for the industry. When we started getting calls from Melbourne about our work, I thought it was important to join the Association to support the industry.

**Most pleasing/rewarding moment during your career so far?**

Client feedback is our fuel! It is so rewarding to hear the positive change that has come from our work with a Club. Hearing of staff who have attended our Sports Turf Leadership Forums implementing ideas, getting promoted and getting the odd text of thanks means the world.

Additionally, getting to build The Toolbox Team and having our team work so well together. We are a fortunate group.

**OFF THE JOB**

**Age - 41**

**Family**

Surrounded by amazing women! Married to Stacey and daughters Maddy (9) and Annie (4). Rescue greyhound Goldie (also female!).

**Hobbies and interests**

Love the ocean and surf. Just finished building a 20-foot timber boat (took 4.5 years, thousands of hours and lots of great backyard time with family and friends). It was a big day when it was launched! It is our family caravan on the water.



**Greatest sporting moment(s) you have seen**

Some of the finals at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, but the biggest for me was watching Ross Clarke-Jones win the Eddie Aikau Big Wave Event at Waimea Bay on the North Shore of Oahu. For a surfer it does not get much bigger than that! We surfed it straight after the event – mind blowing!

**Favourite Golfer(s)**

Jordan Spieth – was fortunate to watch him up close with the Maintenance Team at Royal Sydney Golf Club at the 2016 Australian Open.