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## ECHOING GREEN REFERENCE

Applicant Name: Rick Cameron  
Applicant Organization Name: Tecta Pty Ltd  
  
Recommender Name: John DeJose  
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**1. What do you think of the applicant as a person?** I'd trust Rick with my life. He's the sort of resolute, competent bloke you want around you when things get tough. I enjoy Rick's passion for making anything and everything better and admire his ability to imagine disruptive technologies to do so. He thinks seamlessly across scales, from whole system down to a fine resolution, as his technical reports demonstrate.

**What experiences with the applicant formed your opinions?** I invested in Rick's project to harness the tourism opportunities arising from the world's best and most recently 'discovered' surf breaks for the benefit of the post-Neolithic indigenous landowners. A seaman, like many West Aussies, Rick was drawn to nearby northern tropics. He watched unscrupulous Australian entrepreneurs bring high-priced, boat-based surf tourism to remote Indonesian islands. Cavalier and dissolute skippers, crew and clients abused the naïve locals, leaving a legacy of substance abuse and other cultural corruptors behind. Taking profits offshore, they denied locals any return from their natural assets whilst abetting the demise of Mentawai's ancient culture by illegal offshore logging interests.

Rick imagined a disruptively better, ethical and sustainable, marine-focused eco-tourism industry to replace the unsustainable exploitation of the Mentawai's remaining pristine rainforest. He spent years gaining government licenses for management rights to the breaks and securing fair-trade leases of adjacent land and forest with local partners through his vision of a commercially viable, culturally responsible industry. Rick raised high-level government support because of his determination to grow a collaborative, locally-run, land-based surf-oriented eco-tourism industry founded on equitable partnerships with and meeting the needs of local people. Their rights, lands, waters and culture were protected under legislation drafted in response to indigenous consultation as well as legal and environmental priorities. The legislation was gazetted into law by the Mentawai Parliament. Drawn in by Rick's vision and the leadership he'd shown in a meeting with the State Governor, I signed on as anthropology and environment consultant with a brief to ensure environmental and social sustainability and support for the Mentawaiian culture and the rainforest on which it depends.

Rick tirelessly drew in and inspired a wide range of government officials, local businesses and investors with his vision for a more equitable and beneficial industry, serially overcoming all obstacles with enviable, good-natured tenacity, sound strategy and solid people skills. Inevitably, his leadership also attracted the ire of the charter boat owners, who, (bankrolled by big label surf companies), resorted to political corruption and personal violence against Rick to protect their squatters' profits. Rick's resilience carried the project for 12 years before the boat owners joined forces with illegal logging lobbyists to intimidate and undermine his vision. The short-termist, 'business as usual' paradigm won out - but I gained a lifelong friend.

Rick and his partner Jane Liddon split their time between Fremantle and Sumatra. In Padang they nurture a village run sewing collective whilst cultivating more favourable conditions for the Mentawai vision. After the December 2004 tsunami, they started a 501(c)3 charity to bring aid to the thousands of local people affected. In the midst of chartering a ship and distributing medical and food aid and sharing their local knowledge and resources with other aid groups, Rick conceived a novel tsunami survival technology for helpless remote coastal communities, knowing further disaster to be inevitable owing to the region's geologically instability. In devastated Aceh, Rick saw many poorer dwellings had withstood the tsunami whilst middle-class concrete houses crumbled. As a first responder to the 2009 Padang earthquake, in which friends and neighbours lost lives and livelihoods, Rick began work on rapidly deployable permanent housing for disaster relief, a journey which eventually brought him to Echoing Green.

**2. Aside from the personal qualities of the applicant, what do you think of this applicant's specific approach to solving this problem?** As a systems thinker, Rick realised that building better before disasters was a necessary corollary. A still bigger vision emerged, in which he imagined buildings that would become part of the solution for humanity rather than causing many of its problems. Tecta Pty Ltd is his disruptive response and his social enterprise model for its commercial success to endow sustainable advancement of building technologies in developing countries deserves your support as much as it has mine. His passion for helping vulnerable local people has grown into a personal drive to lead global change in the development industry using the language of money and time which it so well understands. Paradigm shift by stealth...

My own long experience in nature conservation showed me that our 'business as usual' construction industry has caused massive long term ecological damage (for example, as a major contributor to carbon emissions & persistent organic pollutants). As Director, I'd rebuilt Perth Zoo from the ground up for conservation, effectively focussing all activities to create behaviour change in visitors to advance that goal. Hence a new 'behind the scenes' office building was designed to save 75% on typical energy costs. Proven via inbuilt monitoring by the university, I aimed to promote it as a model for similar buildings – to create a market for developments incentivised by tenant demand for lower operating costs. Much of my work aims to change people's behaviour to benefit nature for their own best interests and those of their grandchildren. Most people exert more influence over the built than the natural environment, so I now work in this area to target nature conservation.

My anthropological training also informs my approach. Knowing that no 'higher' civilisation which ever existed on the planet has yet survived, and seeing the same behaviours which killed off earlier peoples playing out each day, I work as best I can to change them. I convene a private group of systems thinkers, including Rick, in aid of this work.

People globally aspire to better homes, increasing demand. Rather than supply homes which 'cost the earth', the Tecta approach affordably provides desired 'modern industrial' standards and achieves carbon negativity and other conservation benefits. People in developing nations want to leave their low-tech homes as soon as they can afford to. Tecta is designed so they can build their own, safe, dream home with the help of a few friends or easily skilled-up contractors. Easily scalable at negligible cost, for natural disaster protection, the innovative Tecta system is designed to avoid the resource skimping which makes other construction methods so dangerous in disaster-prone areas. Carbon emissions drive extreme weather, so reducing carbon footprints in construction and operation will also help constrain the economic, social and environmental losses which result. Tecta's systemic approach is an important change in itself but will also encourage others working on more appropriate building technologies to go still further and do better.

Do the world a favour and support Rick.

Yours faithfully,



John DeJose