

01 February 2025

To Whom it may concern

**Reference: Philip Dobson CEO – Ekokat - Staff Travel Voyage**

During my term of both Chief Minister and Minister of Tourism, Culture & Environment in the Malaysian State of Sabah, I observed and associated with Philip Dobson of the then Touchdown Holiday Group, and the now founder and leader of global tourism developers Staff Travel Voyage, and Ekokat Yachts International with their introduction of a new breed of next generation power catamaran to the global arena. My Ministry followed and endorsed Phil's group activities as major contributors in spearheading the development of our high-end tourism sector – both land and sea based for many years.

As well as the introduction of the high-end villa tourism market, luxury fine dining tourism restaurants, helicopter tourism, tour operating, global tourism marketing and awareness, Phil was effectively the trigger and catalyst for the emergence and growth of the luxury yacht marine tourism and superyacht visitation sector in Malaysian Borneo, with our then Chairman of the Sabah State Tourism Board. There seemed no end to his flair for visionary ideas and creating huge PR for the destination and support in marine infrastructure growth.

**In the field of marine tourism**, Phil undertook many infrastructural, practical and promotional activities to help grow the sector in the state and country Malaysia as a whole.

These included:

He was the keynote speaker at the 2005 Marine Tourism Symposium in Kuala Lumpur on behalf of the state which was created to build a new marine tourism cruising playground from Yangon to Manila Bay through Thailand, Peninsula Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysian Borneo to the Philippines.

Consulted with, and for, the government and private sector, and advised on best practises to ensure the Malaysian state of Sabah was a safe cruising playground for tourism and the private sector, proposing a marine tourism coordination centre for the states cruising waters.

To help boost marine tourism activity and yacht hardware in the state and country, Phil was instrumental in the government's decision to exempt tax and duties for the import of a new classification 'Luxury Motor Yachts', helped with such classification terms and was the 1<sup>st</sup> in Malaysia to import the 1<sup>st</sup> two such luxury yachts.

Set up and operated the 1<sup>st</sup> Superyacht handling agency for the then SEAL superyachts logistics company and was directly responsible for some of the largest superyachts in the world along with celebrities to visit Malaysian Borneo.

Phil set up, imported the yachts and operated the first true luxury yacht charter company in the state of Sabah.

Phil's company Asia Extreme Became the 1<sup>st</sup> South East Asian distributor for British based and manufacturer Ice marine and the Bladerunner powerboat, or which I was fortunate to receive a record breaking passage to our island national park islands and back from our capital city.

Phil also entertained the then King of Malaysia's children and grandchildren on aforementioned powerboat at the Formula 1 World Powerboat championships inland in Kuala Lumpur.

Environment was very much under my remit and I note the attention Phils companies afford to the importance of the dissemination and education of ethical, responsible, environmentally aware and sustainable marine tourism values and the use of renewable energy with his yacht brand.

The State Government and Ministry of Tourism saw Phils vehicle for unprecedented global marketing and awareness for our destination as an extremely useful tool, and Phil was presented with both State and Federal government awards on various occasions for this valued contributions.

**Phil has briefed me on his expansion and entry into the luxury yacht market with Ekokat Yachts International over the past few years and the introduction of a Next Generation and game changing power catamaran. I have no doubt that Phils visionary ideas and stewardship will quickly lead to the yacht brand rightfully claiming a globally leading position in its class, and from what I can gather even larger classes above it.**

**During my time and dealings with Phil Dobson, I found him to be a true visionary, innovative and creative person with integrity and extensive knowledge and experience in the global marine tourism industry, and I so would highly endorse his enterprises.**

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PP Loh', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Tan Sri Datuk Chong Kah Kiat**  
dckk52@gmail.com

**CHIEF MINISTER 2001 - 2003**

**MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT 1999 - 2007**