

Press Release : Burkhard Fischer assumes chairmanship of Association of Average Adjusters with a focus on strengthening support globally for members



ASSOCIATION OF  
Average Adjusters

## **Burkhard Fischer assumes chairmanship of Association of Average Adjusters with a focus on strengthening support globally for members**

23<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Burkhard Fischer has been elected chair of the Association of Average Adjusters for the term 2023-2024 and pledged to help strengthen support for the international members in the body which has served the marine claims sector for more than a century and a half.

Widely renowned for his expertise in marine insurance, Mr Fischer, a director of Albatross Adjusters, Limassol, succeeds Sir Nigel Teare, an Honorary Fellow of the Association, who has been chair for 2022-23. Mr Fischer has served as vice-chair of the Association for the past seven years and chaired the General Average sub-committee.

At the Association's annual conference in London on May 11, 2023, Mr Fischer said that a priority during his term will be increasing the involvement of the membership based outside London. This could be achieved "by organising seminars and social events, not as a one-off but rather on a regular basis."

He explained: "During the last one and a half decades the Association has done a great job in widening its appeal with the exams, qualifications, and various levels of membership, plus the acceptance of Fellows working for non-adjusting companies." About half the number of Fellows is now based outside the UK.

"There have always been Fellows working abroad, but what has changed is that in the past those used to be mainly UK nationals who were linked to a UK company and were often only posted for a few years. Nowadays there are several Fellows that have never worked and might never work in the UK. The same applies for many members who are Associates, and I would expect the numbers to further increase over the next years."

He said: "We are thinking about seminars and receptions to be held in places other than London, possibly even a dinner event every so many years, in one of the major shipping

hubs, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Piraeus, Tokyo, Rotterdam or Hamburg. Perhaps even in Liverpool, where an impressive number of young Fellows is based. The younger generation of Fellows and Associates especially is invited to contribute their ideas and offer their active support.”

While some older Fellows were stepping down from committees and pondering retirement, the total number of practising Fellows had slightly increased. “This is a positive sign: the Association is in a healthy shape, and there is potential to further increase the membership by promoting the Association through seminars and events.

“However, what about the profession itself of average adjuster, is that safe as well? Unfortunately, not as safe as it should be, and I am referring here mainly to the independent average adjuster. We pride ourselves in our ability to adjust claims in accordance with our known standards, and to provide independent and unbiased advice to shipowners and to the marine insurance industry, often on a 24/7 basis.

“Leading marine insurers and brokers are relying not only on our proven educational background but on the fact that we look back on several years, quite often decades, of claims handling experience. It is no secret and perhaps no surprise that over the years, they have shown a desire to enhance their in-house expertise by employing Fellows of the Association, and we have to acknowledge the attraction for both sides.

“More expertise should always be welcomed; however, we should complement each other rather than compete. Should the trend continue that marine insurers steer towards adjusting claims in-house, this will limit the business opportunities for truly independent adjusters, which in the long run could render an adjusting career, and the training ground, less attractive. It is no coincidence that there are currently only a handful of countries where young people seem to consider a future in average adjusting.”

Mr Fischer said that it was “a true privilege for me as a German national” to chair a UK association. The Association had its first overseas chairman in 2018 with Willum Richards of New Zealand, and subsequently Michiel Starmans of Amsterdam-based Spliethoff Group was the first non-British chairman, also based outside the UK. This shows that the Association is becoming even more international and more diverse.”

Mr Fischer had always felt that his term as chair would mark the beginning of a new phase for the Association, “because when I qualified as a Fellow in 2011, a 15-year drought came to an end, during which only a handful of new Fellows had qualified. It is unavoidable that future chairs of the Association will come mainly from the pool of young women and men that qualified after me.”

He concluded: “We are living through difficult times, the world is facing challenges of various categories, geopolitical, environmental, economic, technological and societal. Insurance cover against war risks, natural disasters and widespread cybercrime is more important than ever, and that means that there will always be a need for claims adjusters, problem-solvers, and mediators. This is our role, this is what we are good at, and we must ensure that we continue promoting the value of our services.”

Mr Fischer has spent most of his adjusting career with one company, Albatross Adjusters (previously SHH) in Limassol. Before deciding to settle in Cyprus 37 years ago, he entered the shipping world as a deck cadet with the German merchant navy, then after a break of seven years switched to marine insurance and adjusting.

New vice-chair of the Association is Chris Kilbee who started his working life in London in 1975. Apart from 12 years in Australia, in Perth and Sydney, he has been practising as an average adjuster in Singapore since 1977. He qualified as a Fellow in 1987 and heads Marine Claims Office, an adjusting firm with offices in Singapore, Jakarta, and Perth.

Other officers of the Association are unchanged: Tristan Miller as treasurer, Keith Martin as convenor of the examining committee and David Clancey as convenor of the advisory and dispute resolution panel. Joseph Shead has been elected to the committee of management.

Members of the Association warmly thanked Ian Tucker, who has retired from active adjusting, for his services. Mr Tucker began his career with Eagle Star Insurance in 1969, moving to Blue Star Line, a leading shipowner. He entered the average adjusting profession in 1972 and spent the next 21 years with William Elmslie & Son and ER Lindley & Sons, before moving to Maritime Adjusting Services. He was the Association's treasurer for 11 years.

*Note to editors: The Association of Average Adjusters promotes professional principles in the adjustment of marine claims, uniformity of adjusting practice, and the maintenance of high standards of professional conduct. Irrespective of the identity of the instructing party, the average adjuster is bound to act in an impartial and independent manner. The Association plays an important part in London insurance market committees and has strong relationships with international associations and insurance markets.*

Please see [www.average-adjusters.com](http://www.average-adjusters.com)