

Titanic replica plans resurrected – and it could set sail in 2027

Fresh plans have emerged for the Titanic II cruise liner, first announced a decade ago. What could possibly go wrong?

It was an ambitious scheme that seemed to have sunk without a trace. But in a presentation this week, Australian mining tycoon Clive Palmer revived the idea of building Titanic II, a replica of the doomed liner.

The project has a long history, having first surfaced in 2012, a century after the original struck an iceberg. But despite Palmer's bluster then – in a London press conference 11 years ago, "rubbish" was his response to claims that it was all a hoax – nothing came of it.

Now the billionaire has pencilled in 2027 for the launch, telling an audience at Sydney Opera House: "We are very pleased to announce that after unforeseen global delays, we have re-engaged with partners to bring the dream of Titanic II to life. Let the journey begin."

Though Palmer claimed in the past to have would-be passengers willing to offer up to £1million to join the maiden voyage – first scheduled to be in 2016 – British travel experts are sceptical as to whether modern-day cruisers want to return to the sailing experience of the early 20th century, even without a tragic ending.

Palmer's idea is for a 56,000 gross-ton, nine-deck ship to carry 2,435 passengers with the same interior spaces and cabin layout as Titanic. Of the 835 cabins, 383 would be in first class, 201 in second and 251 in third.

Other facilities on the 882ft-long, diesel-powered ship would reflect those on the original, with traditional dining rooms, a ballroom, indoor pool, Turkish baths, theatre, smoking room and old-fashioned gym. Palmer has previously hinted that period costumes would be provided in cabins for guests to dress up and that they could pay a premium to experience all three classes during an ocean crossing.

The billionaire suggested he would travel in third class, adding: "I want some Irish stew with people who don't know me. I'll go incognito."

But cruise industry insiders say Palmer may be facing more challenges beyond the quality of the food.

Travel writer Anthony Nicholas, the author of *Key Figures Aboard RMS Titanic*, said: "The original ship had just four lifts – three for first-class passengers, one for second and none at all for third. That wouldn't work today. Where are they going to put extra lifts and how much space will this take up from the original style of the interior?"