

# Great WEEKEND



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## Facebook reunites Mackay family

An online social networking tool was the catalyst that will tomorrow reunite hundreds of Charlie and Teresa Mifsud's descendants from across the globe

**C**ARMELO Joseph Mifsud was a wide-eyed 24-year-old when he boarded a ship from Malta to Australia in 1923 to set up a life for his family.

Charlie – as he was known – waved goodbye to his young wife, 22-year-old Teresa (nee Borg) and their first little girl, Mary, and made his way to Habana, a north Queensland community rumoured to be thick with both sugarcane and opportunity.

Two years later, when he had settled, he sent for Teresa and the pair set about working the land and building their family.

They had 13 children – nine of whom married and had children of their own.

It is these families that will come together from all corners of the globe for a Mifsud family reunion tomorrow.

Granddaughter Michelle Hill, the instigator of the reunion, said the online social networking tool, Facebook, was the catalyst that drew the extended family back together.

“Jane – my sister – talked me into joining Facebook and all of a sudden I was getting friend requests from people that I thought I didn't know until I starting putting names to faces,” she said.

“Then I got a request from Colleen Newton – my cousin – and we agreed how sad it was that we didn't know each other any more, as

we grew up in such a close-knit family.”

Michelle realised 2009 would mark 30 years since the death of her grandparents and came up with the idea of a reunion to celebrate their life. She floated the concept and it spiralled from there.

“I thought we could have something simple like a picnic in the park, and whoever could

**I got a Facebook request from my cousin and we agreed how sad it was that we didn't know each other any more, as we grew up in such a close-knit family.**

— Reunion instigator Michelle Hill

be there could be there. Nunna died in June so hence the date of the June long weekend.”

Michelle sent Facebook messages to members of as many families as possible and ideas began flowing.

It is expected about 300 of Charlie and Teresa's descendants will meet at Greenmount Homestead, Walkerston, for the reunion.

Members of the 400-strong family now live in England, France and Japan; California,

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ABOVE: A typical picture of Charlie and Teresa Mifsud on their Donaldson Street verandah in 1977.

PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED

BELOW: The reunion invitation was designed by Charlie and Teresa's great-granddaughter Bronwyn Fenech of FM Studios, Rockhampton.



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