

Three killed in 1913 tram crash tragedy

Trams which operated in Rockhampton between 1909 and 1939 were not without their hazards, an elderly Rockhampton man told the *Morning Bulletin* yesterday.

Mr J.H.K. McLeod, 87, recalls the most disastrous incident of Rockhampton's 75 years of public transport very clearly. It occurred on September 28, 1913, when a large crowd gathered at the Botanical Gardens to hear a Sunday afternoon concert by the Lakes Creek Brass Band.

"We'd come up to Rockhampton by horse-drawn bus and had continued on by tram to the Gardens.

There was not a lot of entertainment in those days and the public had turned out in force for our programme of music.

After the performance, we all headed for the Agnes Street terminal. Usually the No. 2 tram was reserved for the band, but as we played an extra tune it was given

over to the public and the No. 3 was marked for the band.

The No. 2 tram set off, but as it approached the sharp corner from Ward Street into Dagmar Street, it left the rails and turned onto its side.

We were just behind it and quickly on the spot.

The tram was overloaded, as it always was after the performances, and of course it was open at the sides and people rode on the steps. It was very dangerous.

Many people were injured and one man was killed. Another young man had both his legs cut off."

According to an Australian Railway Historical Society bulletin, speed was not

checked on the long steep downgrade in Ward Street and the car took the sharp curve at an excessive speed. Two of the injured later died.

In 1919 a goods train collided with a tram trailer on the corner of Archer and Denison Streets. Several people were injured but no one was killed.

● (BELOW): Rockhampton's original trams system comprised four routes — Botanical Gardens, Upper Dawson Road, Showground and Canning Street. Three people were killed in 1913 when speed was not checked on the sharp curve from Ward Street into Dagmar Street on the Gardens route.

