

Rochester set to come alive with a week of murals, music and creative energy

Rochester is gearing up for a busy and exciting week, with the town set to burst into colour, creativity and community connection as the Rochester Mural Festival, Sips & Sounds Festival, and the Creative Seeds Exhibition combine to deliver one of the biggest weeks on the local calendar.

Festivities begin on Saturday 21 March with the much-anticipated Meet the Artist Dinner, welcoming mural artists, guests and community members to celebrate the start of festival week. Painting officially begins on Sunday 22 March, with artists starting work in Mural Park, transforming the space into a live outdoor studio where visitors can watch murals come to life throughout the week.

Running alongside the mural painting is the Creative Seeds Exhibition, showcased across the week and featuring works from local artists, with daily creative workshops encouraging people of all ages to get involved. The town's arts program continues with an art exhibition in the Shire Hall, including selected pieces from mural artists, as well as workshops that will be held during the week.

A key highlight this year is the creation of a collaborative community mural piece, bringing locals together to contribute to a shared artwork that will be displayed in the Bendigo Bank once complete — a lasting symbol of connection, creativity and community pride.

The mural painting wraps up with Brushes Down on Friday 27 March, followed by a weekend of live music and celebrations. The energy lifts Friday night with the Sips & Sounds Warm Up Event at the Rochester Bowls Club, featuring Probably Guilty, with live music continuing later at the Rochy Hotel with local Nigel Riordan and his band The \$2 Dollar Bourbons.

The week culminates in a full day of culture and entertainment on Saturday, with the Sips & Sounds Festival delivering a vibrant mix of art, music, workshops and family-friendly fun.

The day kicks off with the Town Market from 9:00am to 1:00pm, while Mural Park comes alive from 10:00am with live music and celebrations. The much-anticipated Mega Raffle will be drawn at 11:00am, followed by the announcement of the winning artist and mural.

From 11:00am, music rolls through town with performances at Platypus Park (Campaspe Park), alongside workshops and exhibitions across town including the Shire Hall display. Visitors can also enjoy Sip n Shop, where local businesses across the CBD host tastings from regional wineries, distilleries and breweries, encouraging people to explore and experience Rochester's vibrant main street.

From 12:00pm, families can enjoy a range of children's activities including a bubble workshop, face painting, and karaoke, while live music continues throughout the day at local parks and hospitality venues.

Rochester Business Network President Sanjay Ranchhod said the week is a huge moment for the town and a celebration of what's possible when the community works together.

"This is a very exciting week for Rochester and one we're incredibly proud of. Events like the Mural Festival, Creative Seeds and Sips & Sounds bring many tourists to town, showcase our creativity, and create an amazing buzz right through the CBD."

Sanjay Ranchhod, Rochester Business Network President said.

"It's also a great example of the power of collaboration — it's fantastic to see so many community groups, individuals and businesses getting behind the event in different ways, whether it's through sponsorship, buying raffle tickets, volunteering time, providing in-kind donations, or hosting and being part of the Sips & Sounds Festival."

Mr Ranchhod also acknowledged the major partners who have helped make the week possible.

“This week and these events wouldn’t be possible without the incredible support of our sponsors — especially Bendigo Bank, who have generously funded the 2026 Rochester Mural Festival, and the North Central Catchment Management Authority, who have greatly supported Sips & Sounds,” he said. “We also want to thank all our incredible local businesses and community members who have contributed and supported in so many ways — it truly takes a whole town to deliver a week like this.”

With murals, music, markets, exhibitions and hands-on creativity, the week promises something for everyone — celebrating what makes Rochester unique and bringing the community together in the heart of town.