

AUSTRALIANS HAIL UGANDA'S TOURISM OFFERINGS

By John Masaba

A high-level delegation of Australian travel professionals, tourism marketers, media personalities and tour operators is currently undertaking a 10-day familiarisation tour across Uganda.

Organised by the Uganda High Commission in Canberra in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, alongside agencies including the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) and the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the initiative marks a major multi-agency strategic

push to penetrate the premium Australian outbound travel market.

The tour represents a deliberate shift in Uganda's international marketing strategy of moving away from traditional, hands-off safari sightseeing toward high-value, emotionally-immersive, ethical, and transformational travel experiences.

According to Susan Tiisa Mugwanya, the head of tourism at the Ugandan High Commission in Canberra, the strategy targets sophisticated, well-travelled and highly conscious Australian tourists.



The Australian delegation commenced its journey last week in south-western Uganda.



The Australian tourists at Lake Mutanda in Kisoro district

"The Australian market is mature and evolving. People are no longer simply looking for holidays or conventional luxury consumption. They are looking for meaning, authenticity, conservation and experiences that stay with them long after they return home," she said.

Mugwanya noted that Uganda holds a unique competitive advantage in the global tourism economy because its offerings naturally answer this shift.

The country's relatively untouched tourism environment provides long-haul travellers with the space to engage deeply with nature and local communities without feeling rushed.

ETHICAL CONSERVATION

Beyond wildlife tracking, the tour highlighted Uganda's model for conservation-linked community development, which delegates praised as a global benchmark.

The group spent time interacting with local guides, women-led enterprises, youth groups and community tourism operators in Kisoro whose livelihoods are directly tied to the tourism economy.

Fiona Harper from Mitribe Media in Canberra noted that Uganda successfully bridges the gap between protecting ecosystems and sustaining human families.

"When travellers realise that their tourism dollars are helping conserve forests, support families, create jobs, and empower local communities, the emotional connection becomes much deeper," Harper stated.

Delegates also reported that ordinary, unscripted human encounters like village walks, shared conversations, and roadside interactions stood out as the "new luxury".

Another delegate remarked that in a global industry heavily manufactured for social media,

RELATABLE WILDERNESS

The Australian delegation commenced its journey last week in south-western Uganda, travelling from Kampala through Entebbe to Kisoro.

One of the highlights of the tour was mountain gorilla tracking inside Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, which the delegates described as raw, humbling, and physically intense.

Nadine Jones, the Australian team lead, said the unfiltered eye contact with a mountain gorilla completely disarms visitors emotionally.

"When you trek through Bwindi, it feels deeply rewarding because it is not manufactured convenience. You feel like you have genuinely experienced something rare," Jones noted.

Thomas Reid, an international tourism expert with over 30 years of experience, pointed out that the rugged, immersive nature of Uganda's wilderness aligns perfectly with the psychology of Australian travellers, who grow up with an outdoor identity.

"We understand ruggedness, distance, hiking culture, wildlife respect, camp-fire storytelling and the emotional reset that comes from nature," Reid said.

He observed that while many global destinations feel managed for passive observation, Uganda demands absolute presence because visitors are physically inside the environment.

Uganda's hospitality remains refreshingly honest and lived rather than staged.

The familiarisation tour comes against a backdrop of an escalating global demand for regenerative travel, adventure tourism, and mental wellness.

Tourism officials note that modern long-haul travellers are increasingly battling digital fatigue, burnout, and emotional exhaustion from fast-paced lifestyles.

By showcasing Bwindi and its surrounding community ecosystems, Uganda is actively positioning itself as a premier destination for psychological restoration and mindfulness-oriented travel.

Industry strategists anticipate that this campaign will yield high-value, long-term dividends for Uganda's tourism sector, noting that emotionally

impactful travel experiences generate significantly stronger word-of-mouth advocates, higher destination loyalty, repeat travel interest, and organic social media storytelling compared to conventional sightseeing.

According to UWA, foreign non-residents took the lion's share of visitors' numbers to protected areas in the financial year 2022-2023 with 382,000 visitors, of which East Africans were 101,860.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, Uganda welcomed over 1.5 million visitors and received \$1.4 (over sh6 trillion) in tourism revenue; this was cut to one-third in the following year according to tourism minister Tom Butume.

However, the numbers have since gone back to pre-COVID-19 times.

NAKASONGOLA DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

P.O. BOX 1, NAKASONGOLA

BID NOTICE

Nakasongola District invites competent registered firms/companies, Associations and Special Interest Groups (Women, Youth and People with Disabilities) to submit their bids for pre-qualification for provision of Works, Supplies, Services, and frame work contracts and Management of Local revenue facilities in the Financial Year 2026/2027.

- Works: Naks903/Works/2026-2027**
 - General Construction and all civil works
 - Drilling of hand pump boreholes.
- Supplies: Naks903/Supplies/2026-2027**
 - General Agricultural/Veterinary Supplies.
 - Supply of furniture & fittings.
 - Supply of computers, Photocopiers, Printers, Printer consumables and accessories.
 - Medical and Laboratory Supplies.
- Services: Naks903/Services/2026-2027**
 - Repair and Servicing of computers and other office equipment.
 - Mechanical repair of Motor Vehicles and Plants.
- Frame work Contracts for financial year 2026-2027**
 - Supply of Printed Stationery
 - Supply of Assorted office stationery
 - Supply of all Hard ware Construction and Assorted road materials
 - Supply of Petroleum Products and Lubricants
 - Catering services
 - Supply of Motor Vehicle/Motorcycle tyres, tubes and batteries.
 - Servicing of Motor vehicles and all road Plants

5. Management of Local revenue in all Sub-counties, Town Councils and district wide Nakasongola District from 1st July 2026 to 30th June 2027. The Local Revenue facilities include:
Charcoal loading fees, Animal loading, Open Markets, Truck packing, Live stock Markets, Slaughter sheds, Sand mines and Any other available revenue facilities.

All interested bidders for local revenue management SHALL obtain detailed information from the District Procurement and Disposal Unit.

Terms and conditions for pre-qualification

- Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the Open National bidding; a procedure contained in the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, and is open to all bidders eligible.
- Pre-qualification/Bidding documents in English Language may be obtained from Procurement and Disposal Unit Nakasongola District Local

Government upon presentation of evidence of payment of non-refundable fees of UGX 100,000/= for all categories under prequalification and frame work contracts. Those interested in Local Revenue facilities Management SHALL Pay UGX50,000/= Grade A, UGX 30,000/= Grade B and UGX 20,000/= Grade C per facility through Integrated Revenue Administration Systems (IRAS).

- Each item shall be applied for separately.
- Bid envelope clearly marked "Contract/Tender/Revenue facility (specify) /Pre-qualification Document for...."
- Addressed to:
(a) The Head Procurement and Disposal Unit Nakasongola District Local Government
Email: nuwagashasam2060@gmail.com P.O. Box 1, Nakasongola or hand delivered at Procurement and Disposal Unit Offices Water sector building before 11:00am Local time on 8/06/2026 for Local revenue management 2026-2027 and before 11:00am Local time on 16th June 2026 for prequalification 2026-2027 at Procurement and Disposal Unit Offices Water sector building before respectively. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
Address of Bids Opening: Procurement and Disposal Unit Offices.

Planned Schedule (Subject to Changes) is as follows.

S/N	Activity	Date
1.	Publish Bid notice	18 th May 2026
2.	Bid Closing date (Local Revenue Management)	8 th June 2026 at 11:00am
3.	Bid Opening date (Local Revenue Management)	8 th June 2026 at 11:30am
4.	Bid Closing date (Prequalification)	16 th June 2026 at 2:00pm
5.	Bid Opening date (Prequalification)	16 th June 2026 at 2:30pm
6.	Evaluation Process (Local Revenue Management)	9/6/2026-12/6/2026
7.	Display and Communication of Best evaluated bidder notice (Local Revenue Management)	15/06/2026
8.	Contract award/and Signature	After expiry of best evaluated bidder notice

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER - NAKASONGOLA