2026 · GOLD BLUEPRINT

Has gold lost its *shine?*

What role should gold play in a portfolio?
Central-bank demand, the reserve mix, Australian-dollar exposure and the risks behind the headlines.

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PRIVATE
BLUEPRINT

03 / KG

01 · THE SETUP

Structural forces. Tactical volatility.

Gold's portfolio role and its short-term price path are different questions. Central-bank demand remains material, but the buying is uneven: the World Gold Council estimated 345 tonnes of net demand in H1 2026, the lowest first-half total since 2022.[02]

345t	23t	27%
H1 2026 NET DEMAND	JULY REPORTED NET BUYING	GOLD IN OFFICIAL RESERVES
WGC estimate including unreported activity.[02]	Monthly reported data, not the same coverage as H1.[03]	End-2025 value share; substantially price-driven.[04]

The ECB put gold above US Treasuries in official reserves at end-2025 by market value. Its analysis also shows why that is not evidence of an equivalent switch out of dollars: gold-price appreciation accounts for much of the change.[04]

> THE FOUR QUESTIONS
>
> Who is buying? What do reserve shares actually measure? How does currency affect an Australian investor? What risks and costs come with the chosen form of exposure?

02 World Gold Council, Q2 2026 central banks; revised estimates. https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-demand-trends/gold-demand-trends-q2-2026/central-banks

03 World Gold Council, July reported central-bank activity, 3 September 2026. https://www.gold.org/goldhub/gold-focus/2026/09/central-bank-gold-statistics-central-banks-make-positive-headlines-gold

04 ECB, The international role of the euro, June 2026. https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/other-publications/ire/html/ecb.ire202606.en.html

02 · THE PRICE STORY

A rally is not a risk assessment.

The latest completed monthly review used here is the World Gold Council's August commentary, published on 9 September. It reports a strong August rebound, with ETF buying and a weaker US dollar among the contributors.[05]

13.3%
AUGUST USD RETURN
Gold return reported by WGC to 31 August 2026.[05]

11.2%
AUGUST AUD RETURN
Same month, expressed in Australian dollars.[05]

-8%
Q2 VS Q1 AVERAGE
Change in the quarterly average LBMA PM USD gold price.[01]

The quarterly average price comparison and the monthly returns measure different things. Neither is a live quote or a forecast, and a recovery over one month does not establish that the previous peak will be regained.[01,05]

> READ THE DATE AND THE SERIES
> This edition deliberately avoids a live-price headline. Spot, benchmark, intraday and month-end series can differ. These historical figures are before product-specific fees, taxes and implementation costs. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance.

01 World Gold Council, Gold Demand Trends Q2 2026, 30 July 2026. https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-demand-trends/gold-demand-trends-q2-2026
05 World Gold Council, August market commentary, 9 September 2026. https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-market-commentary-august-2026

03 · THE CENTRAL BANK STORY

Buying continues.
Not in a straight line.

The World Gold Council estimated Q2 2026 central-bank net purchases at 289 tonnes. That rebound followed a downward revision of Q1 to around 57 tonnes, taking the first-half estimate to 345 tonnes.[02]

Quarterly estimates can change

The Q1 estimate had previously been 244 tonnes. The size of the revision is a reminder that official-sector totals combine reported transactions with estimates of activity that has not yet been disclosed.[02]

The more recent monthly reading

July reported net buying was 23 tonnes. China reported adding 20 tonnes and Poland 8 tonnes, while reported sales elsewhere offset part of those additions.[03]

Do not mix the datasets

Reported purchases through July were around 130 tonnes. This is not a replacement for the larger H1 estimate and must not be added to it: the periods overlap and the datasets have different coverage.[02,03]

> PORTFOLIO QUESTION
>
> Central banks have reserve-management objectives that differ from those of an individual investor. Their purchases are context, not an instruction to copy their allocation.

02 World Gold Council, Q2 2026 central banks; revised estimates.
https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-demand-trends/gold-demand-trends-q2-2026/central-banks

03 World Gold Council, July reported central-bank activity, 3 September 2026.
https://www.gold.org/goldhub/gold-focus/2026/09/central-bank-gold-statistics-central-banks-make-positive-headlines-gold

04 · OFFICIAL RESERVES

Gold versus Treasuries: what changed?

The ECB's June 2026 report put gold at 27% of total official foreign reserves at end-2025, compared with 22% for US Treasuries. These are market-value shares of reserves including both foreign exchange and gold.[04]

27%
GOLD
End-2025 share at market prices.[04]

22%
US TREASURIES
End-2025 share at market prices.[04]

16%
GOLD, REPRICED
Share using the end-2023 gold price.[04]

Using the end-2023 gold price to remove much of the valuation effect, gold's share was 16% and US Treasuries remained higher at 26%. The headline crossover therefore does not, on its own, demonstrate wholesale reserve-manager reallocation.[04]

> KEEP THE COMPARISON PRECISE
> Gold's share of total reserves is not the same measure as a currency's share of foreign-exchange reserves. Do not mix these denominators or treat a price-driven increase as a physical purchase.

04 ECB, The international role of the euro, June 2026. https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/other-publications/ire/html/ecb.ire202606.en.html

05 · THE AUSTRALIAN LENS

One asset.
Two price drivers.

For an unhedged Australian investor, the gold price and the Australian dollar both matter. Currency movements can change the local-currency return even when the underlying overseas asset is unchanged.[07]

> A SIMPLE CONVERSION
>
> AUD gold price per ounce = USD gold price per ounce divided by AUD/USD, where AUD/USD is US dollars per Australian dollar. This is a currency conversion, not a return forecast.

A worked example, not a market quote

Assume gold is US$4,000/oz and AUD/USD is 0.70. That equates to about A$5,714/oz. If AUD/USD rises to 0.77 with gold unchanged, the AUD value falls to about A$5,195/oz, a 9.1% decline. The figures are hypothetical and exclude costs.

Why the distinction matters

WGC's August review reported a 13.3% monthly gold return in USD and 11.2% in AUD. For the year to 31 August, its corresponding figures were +4.5% and -2.2%. These are historical currency-denominated returns, not product returns.[05]

> AUSTRALIAN MARKET CALLOUT
>
> A listed gold miner is an operating business, not a unit of bullion. Gold prices, production costs, financing and company decisions all need separate consideration. This briefing does not select individual shares.

05 World Gold Council, August market commentary, 9 September 2026. https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-market-commentary-august-2026
07 ASIC Moneysmart, Develop an investing plan. https://moneysmart.gov.au/how-to-invest/develop-an-investing-plan

06 · THE MACRO SETUP

A framework, not a price target.

The World Gold Council's September commentary examines how real yields, the US dollar and confidence in fiscal policy can interact with gold. Its interpretation is market analysis, not a guaranteed transmission mechanism.[05]

Interest rates and opportunity cost

Physical gold pays no interest. Changes in the return available on other assets therefore matter to the comparison, but they do not by themselves determine the gold price.[04,05]

The dollar and liquidity

A weaker US dollar contributed to August's rise in WGC's attribution model. That historical relationship is not a rule that must hold in every period.[05]

Fiscal policy and confidence

WGC discusses differing outcomes depending on whether intervention is accompanied by credible fiscal restraint. The relevant question is the market's response to policy, not simply whether government borrowing is large.[05]

> WHAT TO MONITOR
>
> Real yields, currency, investor flows and official-sector activity. A convincing narrative should still be tested against price volatility, implementation costs and the rest of the portfolio.

04 ECB, The international role of the euro, June 2026. https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/other-publications/ire/html/ecb.ire202606.en.html

05 World Gold Council, August market commentary, 9 September 2026. https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-market-commentary-august-2026

07 · FORMS OF EXPOSURE

The route changes the risk.

The following is a comparison framework, not a list of recommended products. The legal structure and disclosure documents matter as much as the asset label.[06,07]

Physical bullion

Questions include ownership, storage, insurance, custody and dealing spreads. The ECB notes that physical gold is volatile, not remunerated and costly to store.[04]

Gold-tracking exchange-traded products

Check what the product actually holds or tracks, its fees, liquidity and any currency hedging. ETF prices can differ from net asset value, and returns can diverge from the asset being tracked.[06]

Mining equities and funds

Ask whether the intended exposure is to bullion or to operating companies. Sector concentration and market risk remain relevant; an investment label does not remove those risks.[07]

Derivatives and leveraged exposure

Borrowing or leverage can magnify losses. Establish the potential loss, liquidity requirements and contractual obligations before considering any structure.[07]

BEFORE CHOOSING A ROUTE

Read the applicable Product Disclosure Statement and other relevant disclosure documents. This blueprint does not compare named products, recommend a route or set an allocation.

04 ECB, The international role of the euro, June 2026. https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/other-publications/ire/html/ecb.ire202606.en.html
06 ASIC Moneysmart, Exchange traded funds. https://moneysmart.gov.au/managed-funds-and-etfs/exchange-traded-funds-etfs
07 ASIC Moneysmart, Develop an investing plan. https://moneysmart.gov.au/how-to-invest/develop-an-investing-plan

08 · PORTFOLIO ROLE

Start with the purpose. Then the position.

Diversification is about the combined portfolio rather than finding one asset that performs in every environment. Different assets can perform differently, but diversification does not eliminate the risk of loss.[05,08]

Define the job

Is the proposed role diversification, exposure to a commodity, or a response to a particular risk? These are discussion questions, not interchangeable reasons to buy.

Identify what would be displaced

Consider the opportunity cost relative to cash, fixed income, equities or another holding. Objectives, time horizon, liquidity and risk tolerance should guide the decision.[07]

Decide how it would be reviewed

A useful discussion includes a review interval, the circumstances that would change the original rationale and how concentration would be monitored. There is no suggested portfolio percentage in this document.

> A BOUNDARY WORTH KEEPING
>
> A strong macro view is not the same as suitability for a particular person. An appropriate portfolio conversation starts with the investor's circumstances, not a price headline.

05 World Gold Council, August market commentary, 9 September 2026. https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-market-commentary-august-2026
07 ASIC Moneysmart, Develop an investing plan. https://moneysmart.gov.au/how-to-invest/develop-an-investing-plan
08 ASIC Moneysmart, Diversification. https://moneysmart.gov.au/how-to-invest/diversification

09 · THE RISKS

What could go wrong?

The downside belongs in the same conversation as the investment case. Gold and gold-related investments are not capital-guaranteed.[04,07]

Price and opportunity cost

Gold can be volatile and physical gold pays no interest. Storage and other costs can reduce the outcome even if the quoted price is unchanged.[04]

Currency, liquidity and concentration

Exchange-rate movements can affect returns. Selling may be difficult or costly during stressed conditions, and an oversized position can dominate portfolio outcomes.[07]

Structure, tracking and counterparties

An exchange-traded product may trade away from net asset value and may not perfectly track its intended exposure. Synthetic structures can introduce derivative-counterparty risk.[06]

> NOT A PROMISE
>
> Gold need not rise during every inflation shock or market sell-off. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Losses remain possible even where an investment is described as a diversifier.

04 ECB, The international role of the euro, June 2026. https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/other-publications/ire/html/ecb.ire202606.en.html
06 ASIC Moneysmart, Exchange traded funds. https://moneysmart.gov.au/managed-funds-and-etfs/exchange-traded-funds-etfs
07 ASIC Moneysmart, Develop an investing plan. https://moneysmart.gov.au/how-to-invest/develop-an-investing-plan

10 · DECISION CHECKLIST

Questions before an allocation.

Use this checklist to prepare a discussion, not to produce a buy or sell signal. It follows the planning considerations of objectives, time frame, risk, liquidity, costs and tax highlighted by ASIC Moneysmart.[07]

Purpose

What specific role would the exposure serve, and what would it replace?

Time frame

How long could the capital remain invested without needing to sell?

Loss tolerance

What fall in value could be absorbed without changing essential plans?

Currency

Is the intended exposure hedged or unhedged, and why?

Structure and costs

What is owned, what are the ongoing and dealing costs, and how is it held?

Review discipline

What would lead to rebalancing, reducing or removing the position?

> DOCUMENTS TO READ
>
> For any particular financial product, obtain and consider the applicable disclosure documents. For an ETF, the PDS explains the intended exposure, fees, dealing arrangements and risks.[06]

06 ASIC Moneysmart, Exchange traded funds. https://moneysmart.gov.au/managed-funds-and-etfs/exchange-traded-funds-etfs

07 ASIC Moneysmart, Develop an investing plan. https://moneysmart.gov.au/how-to-invest/develop-an-investing-plan

11 · NEXT STEPS

Where does this fit in your portfolio?

A conversation can explore the existing portfolio, investment objectives, time horizon and constraints. This briefing does not recommend a gold allocation or a specific investment.

ARRANGE AN INTRODUCTION
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How to read this edition

Research reviewed on 23 September 2026. The monthly market review covers August; the more recent reported central-bank series used here covers July. Quarterly demand estimates cover H1 and Q2. Publication dates and observation periods are deliberately separated.[01,02,03]

Source discipline

Each research page links directly to its sources. WGC demand estimates can be revised and differ from monthly reported activity. Its analysis is industry research, not independent personal advice. No live price, forecast return or company-specific recommendation is presented.

Scope

For Australian wholesale investors. A reader's declaration is an initial screening step, not a substitute for any verification required before a financial service or investment is provided.

01 World Gold Council, Gold Demand Trends Q2 2026, 30 July 2026. https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-demand-trends/gold-demand-trends-q2-2026

02 World Gold Council, Q2 2026 central banks; revised estimates. https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-demand-trends/gold-demand-trends-q2-2026/central-banks

03 World Gold Council, July reported central-bank activity, 3 September 2026. https://www.gold.org/goldhub/gold-focus/2026/09/central-bank-gold-statistics-central-banks-make-positive-headlines-gold

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Important information