

Price Transparency: How Online Gold Buying Changed the Market

Posted on 28 January 2026 by QBC Analyst

The gold market has undergone a dramatic transformation over the past two decades, and nowhere is this more evident than in how prices are now displayed and accessed. For generations, buying precious metals meant visiting a dealer in person, often with little clarity on whether you were getting a fair price. The internet changed everything.

The Old Days Of Bullion Investing

Before online gold dealers emerged, price discovery was a challenge for everyday investors. Local dealers operated with significant information advantages. Buyers had limited ability to compare prices between dealers, and the spread between buy and sell prices could vary wildly.

Many customers simply had to trust they were getting a reasonable deal, with little recourse to verify the fairness of the transaction. Prices were in the newspaper and if you wanted to compare rates, you would have to phone around or travel to speak

with bullion dealers.

The Digital Revolution

The rise of online bullion dealers brought unprecedented transparency to the market. Real-time pricing became the norm, with websites displaying up-to-the-minute gold and silver prices based on global spot rates. Suddenly, buyers of gold, silver or platinum bullion for example, could compare prices not just between local dealers, but against dealers across Australia and internationally. You can now buy gold online from many dealers in Australia, and compare their rates online instantly.

This shift forced the entire industry to become more competitive and honest. Dealers could no longer rely on customer ignorance or inconvenience to maintain inflated premiums. The spread between buy and sell prices generally tightened, and premium structures became more standardised and justifiable.

Empowered Buyers

Today's gold buyers can be remarkably well-informed. They can check spot prices on their phones, compare premiums across multiple dealers in minutes, and read reviews from other customers before making a purchase. This democratisation of information has leveled the playing field between dealers and customers.

For reputable bullion dealers, this transparency is actually beneficial. It allows us to demonstrate our fair pricing and builds trust with customers who can verify they're getting competitive rates. Dealers who invest in customer education and clear pricing structures stand out in a crowded marketplace.

The Local Advantage

Interestingly, online transparency hasn't eliminated the value of local dealers. While customers can now verify pricing online, many still prefer the personal service, immediate possession, and trusted relationships that come with buying from an established local business. The difference is that local dealers now compete on service and expertise rather than information asymmetry.

For many people who want to buy silver on the Sunshine Coast for example, they like to meet a person behind the counter, ask their questions and feel confident they are making good decisions. So they often compare prices first, see our value

and then come in to visit our store.

The internet didn’t in any way destroy the bullion market, it simply refined it. Price transparency has created a healthier, more competitive industry where knowledgeable dealers and informed customers can transact with mutual confidence.