

GOLD CORPORATION — GOLD BAR CONTENT

107. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I refer to the board chair of Gold Corporation, Mr Sam Walsh, and his refusal to answer questions put to him about the ongoing mismanagement of the Perth Mint.

- (1) Has the Premier sought a briefing from Mr Walsh to understand what he knew and when?
- (2) As Premier and leader of the WA government, which oversees the operations of Gold Corp, why will the Premier not demand that Mr Walsh front the media and clarify his involvement in or knowledge of the issues plaguing Gold Corp, including the money-laundering concerns and gold dilution?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) Just so it is completely clear, there has been no dilution of gold in any gold bars from the Perth Mint—no dilution of gold.

Ms L. Mettam: There are concerns.

Mr M. McGOWAN: They are 99.99 per cent gold. I just want to be accurate in the Parliament. We are dealing with international gold exchanges that watch everything that is said. Every bar of gold is above international standards, which is 99.99 per cent gold. In fact, the Perth Mint is one of the most respected mints in the world because it meets those standards. I just think members need to be very careful with the language they use so that they do not send the wrong message to the international business community.

I think the second part of the question related to Mr Walsh. It will be up to Mr Walsh what media he undertakes. Obviously, I have answered every question put to me on multiple occasions by the Western Australian media. I probably do more press conferences than most people, and certainly more than most Premiers over their time, so I answer the questions as they are put to me. I will continue to do so about my knowledge and so forth of various matters.

In terms of the matters concerning the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre, I am advised that the AUSTRAC legislation was put in place in 2006. The noncompliance by the Mint with those systems and processes was identified in 2021, and we invested \$34 million to repair that. In other words, over the last years of the then Labor government—in 2006, 2007 and 2008—for the entirety of the Barnett Liberal–National government and for the first five years of this government, the systems and processes used by the Mint were not compliant with the AUSTRAC laws. When it was identified, or brought to attention, I think it was last year, we announced a \$34 million investment in computer systems and staff to make sure that we do. I think there were an additional 50 staff or thereabouts employed. That issue has been in place over multiple Liberal and Labor governments. When it was brought to our attention, we invested the money to fix it.