

BHP BILLITON PLC
Form 6-K
September 30, 2004

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 6-K

REPORT OF FOREIGN ISSUER

PURSUANT TO RULE 13a-16 OR 15d-16 OF

THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the Date of

28 September 2004

BHP Billiton Plc

Registration Number 3196209

Neathouse Place

London SW1V 1BH

United Kingdom

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant files or will file annual reports under cover of Form 20-F or Form 40-F.

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|-----------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|--------------------------|
| Form 20-F | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | Form 40-F | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|--------------------------|

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant by furnishing the information contained in this Form is also thereby furnishing the information to the Commission pursuant to Rule 12g3-2(b) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

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|-----|--------------------------|--|----|-------------------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|--------------------------|--|----|-------------------------------------|

If "Yes" is marked, indicate below the file number assigned to the registrant in connection with Rule 12g3-2(b):

Date 28 September 2004

Number 30/04

BHP BILLITON SIGNS WHEELARRA JV AND ANNOUNCES
US\$3.2 BILLION ADDITIONAL SALES CONTRACTS

BHP Billiton today announced the signing of the formal agreement for the Wheelarra Joint Venture with four of China's leading steel mills and its existing Japanese joint venture partners, ITOCHU Minerals & Energy of Australia and Mitsui Iron Ore Corporation.

It also announced that it had secured further long-term sales commitments for its MAC(TM) iron ore products with these Chinese steel mills worth around US\$3.2 billion over the next 10 years.

The Chinese steel mills are:

Wuhan Iron and Steel (Group) Corporation, ("WUGANG")
Maanshan Iron and Steel Company Limited ("MAGANG")
Jiangsu Shagang Group Co Ltd ("SHAGANG")
Tangshan Iron and Steel Co Ltd ("TANGGANG")

The Wheelarra Joint Venture, announced in March this year, centred on a sub-lease over BHP Billiton's Jimblebar mine, near Newman in Western Australia and involved sales of 12 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) of Mt. Newman iron ore over the next 25 years.

The new sales commitments announced today are for the supply of an additional 12Mtpa of MAC(TM) Marra Mamba ore on top of the Mt. Newman iron ore. MAC(TM) ore is produced at BHP Billiton's Area C mine, 120km north of Newman, which opened in October 2003.

President BHP Billiton Iron Ore Graeme Hunt said the doubling of sales and purchase commitments reflects the value of the strategic relationships BHP Billiton has developed with the Chinese steel mills.

"It is extremely pleasing to see that additional benefits have already started flowing to both BHP Billiton and its Chinese partners as a result of the Wheelarra Joint Venture," he said.

"We were always confident that the agreement would underpin a strategic relationship which would grow beyond the sales contracts for the Mt Newman iron ore. This relationship will also ensure BHP Billiton maintains its share of the growing Chinese iron ore market."

BHP Billiton has been able to consistently meet the increase in global demand for iron ore through the responsible and sustainable expansion of its business over the past eight years.

Since 1994 the company has virtually doubled system capacity to 100Mtpa, with almost 40Mtpa of this growth achieved in the past two years alone.

The company also announced the Rapid Growth Project in February 2004, which will increase system capacity to 110Mtpa by the end of 2004, and is nearing completion of a Feasibility Study into the further expansion of capacity to 145Mtpa.

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Further information on BHP Billiton can be found on our Internet site: <http://www.bhpbilliton.com>

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BHP Billiton Limited ABN 49 004 028 077

Registered in Australia
Registered Office: Level 27, 180 Lonsdale Street Melbourne Victoria
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Telephone +61 1300 554 757 Facsimile +61 3 9609 3015

BHP Billiton Plc Registration number 3196209

Registered in England and Wales
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Kingdom
Telephone +44 20 7802 4000 Facsimile +44 20 7802 4111

The BHP Billiton Group is headquartered in Australia

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized.

BHP BILLITON

Plc
/s/ KAREN WOOD

Karen Wood
Title: Company Secretary
Date:

28 September 2004

