

BHP BILLITON PLC
Form 6-K
November 26, 2008

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

Form 6-K

REPORT OF FOREIGN PRIVATE ISSUER
PURSUANT TO RULE 13a-16 OR 15d-16
UNDER THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

November 25, 2008

BHP BILLITON LIMITED

(ABN 49 004 028 077)

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

(Jurisdiction of incorporation or organisation)

180 LONSDALE STREET, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

3000 AUSTRALIA

(Address of principal executive offices)

BHP BILLITON PLC

(REG. NO. 3196209)

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

ENGLAND AND WALES

(Jurisdiction of incorporation or organisation)

NEATHOUSE PLACE, VICTORIA, LONDON,

UNITED KINGDOM

(Address of principal executive offices)

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

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is submitting the Form 6-K in paper as permitted by Regulation S-T Rule 101(b)(1): []

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is submitting the Form 6-K in paper as permitted by Regulation S-T Rule 101(b)(7): []

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: [] Yes [x] No

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

25 November 2008

Number 39/08

BHP BILLITON APPROVES MAJOR CAPACITY EXPANSION AT WESTERN AUSTRALIA IRON ORE

BHP Billiton today announced approval of the Rapid Growth Project 5 (RGP5) with a total capital investment of US\$4.8 billion (BHP Billiton share). This includes previously approved capital of US\$930 million.

RGP5 will increase installed capacity across our Western Australia Iron Ore operations by 50 million tonnes to 205 million tonnes per annum* (100 per cent basis). RGP5 is expected to deliver first production in the second half of the 2011 calendar year.

The majority of production growth will come from the Yandi and Mining Area C operations. RGP5 will also deliver significant infrastructure upgrades including additional shipping berths at the Port Hedland inner harbour (Finucane Island), substantial double tracking of the company's rail system and additional crushing, screening and stockpiling facilities at Yandi.

BHP Billiton Chief Executive of Ferrous and Coal, Marcus Randolph, said that "while there is substantial uncertainty in the short term outlook, this investment decision highlights BHP Billiton's confidence that the long term outlook remains positive. The expansion also underscores our belief that high-quality West Australian iron ore with close proximity to China and the Asian markets, is an important source of supply. With our strong balance sheet, we are well positioned to invest in high-quality and low-risk projects such as RGP5".

BHP Billiton's partners in the Western Australia Iron Ore operations are Itochu Minerals & Energy of Australia Pty Ltd, Mitsui-Itochu Iron Pty Ltd and Mitsui Iron Ore Corporation Pty Ltd.

*BHP Billiton attributable share is approximately 85%.

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

Australia

United Kingdom & South Africa

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BHP Billiton Limited ABN 49 004 028 077

Registered in Australia
Registered Office: Level 27, 180 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
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BHP Billiton Plc Registration number 3196209

Registered in England and Wales
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The BHP Billiton Group is headquartered in Australia

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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 Limited and BHP Billiton Plc

Date: 25 November 2008

By: Jane McAloon

Name: Jane McAloon
Title: Group Company Secretary