

BHP BILLITON LTD
Form 6-K
March 27, 2007

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

March 23, 2007

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

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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

23 March 2007

Number 08/07

BHP BILLITON APPROVES MAJOR CAPACITY EXPANSION AT WESTERN AUSTRALIAN IRON ORE

BHP Billiton today announced approval for the Rapid Growth Project 4 (RGP4) which will increase system capacity across its Western Australian iron ore operations to 155 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa). Initial production is expected to commence in the first half of CY2010.

BHP Billiton has approved capital expenditure of US\$1.85 billion for its share of the project, which includes development of a new crushing and screening plant, as well as additional stockyards, car dumping and train loading facilities at Mt Whaleback. Infrastructure upgrades will also be implemented at satellite orebodies and the rail and port operations.

President BHP Billiton Iron Ore Ian Ashby said RGP4 would deliver large-scale benefits to the Company, its customers, employees and local communities.

"Our high quality asset base in the Pilbara and series of staged growth projects have helped ensure the continued delivery of outstanding returns to BHP Billiton shareholders," he said.

"The RGP4 project will further increase the efficiency of our integrated mine, port and rail operations and represents a key investment in our ongoing strategy to be more responsive to customer needs.

"The project will also have substantial flow-on benefits to Pilbara communities through the creation of employment and business opportunities, improved management of valuable water resources and significantly reduced dust emissions."

Mr Ashby said that a range of options to expand capacity beyond RGP4 are also being evaluated, subject to customer demand.

"We are committed to creating further value-adding options for the business and providing the next phase of growth opportunities beyond our recent expansion projects," he said.

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By the end of CY2007 BHP Billiton will have increased the capacity of its Western Australian iron ore operations by 60Mtpa over the past four years. This growth will have been achieved through a series of sequential projects, delivered on time and within budget.

BHP Billiton's partners in the Pilbara iron ore operations are: Itochu Minerals & Energy of Australia, Mitsui-Itochu Iron and Mitsui Iron Ore Corporation.

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

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Registered in England and Wales
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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 Limited and BHP Billiton Plc

Date: 23 March 2007

By: Karen Wood

Name: Karen Wood

Title: Group Company Secretary