

BHP BILLITON LTD
Form 6-K
August 24, 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

20 August 2004

BHP Billiton Limited

ABN 49 004 028 077

180 Lonsdale Street

Melbourne Victoria 3000

Australia

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 20 August 2004
Number 27/04

CONFIRMATION OF PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS

BHP Billiton confirms that it has held preliminary discussions with representatives of the state government of Orissa in India about options for its iron ore business. Those discussions were held jointly with the Korean steel-maker POSCO.

While the proposal is in the very early stages of development, concepts presented to the government included the construction of a steel plant and port facility and the development of an iron ore mine.

While any joint proposal, were it to proceed to the next stage, might involve all of these components, BHP Billiton's interest would be limited to the supply of steel-making raw materials and associated materials-handling facilities and infrastructure to the steel industry in Orissa. BHP Billiton emphasises that the discussions have been preliminary only. The proposal has received considerable attention in Orissa because of the impact any development would have on the local economy.

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

Australia

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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
Telephone +61 1300 554 757 Facsimile +61 3 9609 3015

BHP Billiton Plc Registration number 3196209

Registered in England and Wales
Registered Office: Neathouse Place London SW1V 1BH United
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

LIMITED

/s/ KAREN WOOD

Karen Wood

Title: Company Secretary

Date:

20 August 2004