

BHP BILLITON PLC
Form 6-K
October 21, 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

21 October 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.

Form 20-F	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Form 40-F	<input type="checkbox"/>
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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	<input type="checkbox"/>		No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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If "Yes" is marked, indicate below the file number assigned to the registrant in connection with Rule 12g3-2(b):

Date 21 October 2004

Number 32/04

BHP BILLITON PRODUCTION REPORT FOR THE QUARTER ENDED
30 SEPTEMBER 2004

BHP Billiton today released its production report for the quarter ended 30 September 2004. Unless otherwise stated, production volumes refer to BHP Billiton share.

- **Record quarterly aluminium production of 339 thousand tonnes.**
- **Record quarterly manganese ore production of 1.4 million tonnes (100% basis).**
- **Continued ramp up of operating capacity at Western Australian Iron Ore operations, with record quarterly production of 23.5 million tonnes (100% basis).**
- **First shipment of LNG from the newly commissioned North West Shelf (Australia) fourth train.**

- Total Petroleum Products

- Total production for the September 2004 quarter was 27.6 million barrels of oil equivalent, 14 per cent lower than the September 2003 quarter and nine per cent lower than the June 2004 quarter.

- ◆ Oil and Condensate - Production for the September 2004 quarter was 12.4 million barrels, 20 per cent lower than the 15.5 million barrels produced in the September 2003 quarter. Planned maintenance at Liverpool Bay (UK) and Bruce (UK) resulted in shutdowns of 14 and 54 days respectively. Production was also lower due to natural field decline at Bass Strait, Laminaria, Griffin, North West Shelf (all Australia) and Liverpool Bay and the divestment in February 2004 of our producing assets in Bolivia. This was partly offset by new production from Ohanet (Algeria) and Boris North (USA) which were commissioned in October 2003 and September 2003 respectively. Production for the quarter was seven per cent lower than the 13.3 million barrels produced in the June 2004 quarter due to maintenance shutdowns at Liverpool Bay and Bruce as well as natural decline across the portfolio.
BHP Billiton

's share of Ohanet production was also lower than the June 2004 quarter where under the terms of the risk sharing contractual agreement higher prices result in lower production entitlements. This was partly offset by higher production from Bass Strait and North West Shelf due to higher downtime in the previous quarter.

- Natural Gas - Production for the September 2004 quarter was 75.9 billion cubic feet, 11 per cent lower than the 85.2 billion cubic feet produced in the September 2003 quarter. This was due to planned maintenance at Liverpool Bay and Bruce plus subsequent production issues on restart of the Liverpool Bay gas plant. This was partially offset by increased production to support higher demand at Bass Strait and North West Shelf LNG. Production for the quarter was 11 per cent lower than the June 2004 quarter due to maintenance shutdowns at Liverpool Bay and Bruce and subsequent restart issues at Liverpool Bay. This was partially offset by higher downtime at North West Shelf in the previous quarter and increased production due to demand for North West Shelf LNG.

- Alumina

- Production for the September 2004 quarter of 1.0 million tonnes was five per cent lower than the September 2003 quarter and six per cent lower than the June 2004 quarter. This mainly reflects scheduled and unscheduled calciner outages leading to increased stockpiling of hydrate at Worsley (Australia) and lower production at Alumar (Brazil) due to scheduled maintenance carried out in July 2004.

- Aluminium

- Production for the September 2004 quarter was a record 339,000 tonnes, 20 per cent higher than the September 2003 quarter, mainly reflecting the ramp up of production from the Mozal 2 (Mozambique) and Hillside 3 (South Africa) expansions, which reached full commissioning in August 2003 and December 2003 respectively. Production was also impacted by an electrical outage at Alumar in the September 2003 quarter. Production was two per cent higher than the June 2004 quarter mainly due to increased production from Hillside and Mozal.

- Copper -

Production for the September 2004 quarter was 248,800 tonnes, 16 per cent higher than the September 2003 quarter. This mainly reflects restoration of full capacity at Escondida (Chile) and Tintaya (Peru) and Antamina's (Peru) return to normal mine plan following the removal of lakebed sediments. This was partly offset by lower head grade at Cerro Colorado (Chile) and sale of the Group's interest in Highland Valley Copper (Canada) in January 2004. Production was nine per cent lower than the June 2004 quarter, mainly reflecting lower head grades at Escondida, Tintaya and Cerro Colorado.

- Silver -

Production for the September 2004 quarter of 11.8 million ounces was 11 per cent higher than the September 2003 quarter and six per cent higher than the June 2004 quarter. This mainly reflects record quarterly mill throughput at Cannington (Australia) resulting from a continuing debottlenecking program.

- Iron Ore

- Production for the September 2004 quarter was a record 22.5 million tonnes, eight per cent higher than the September 2003 quarter and ten per cent higher than the June 2004 quarter. The increase reflects additional capacity following the completion of the Area C, Products and Capacity Expansion and Accelerated Expansion projects at Western Australian Iron Ore, underpinned by strong customer demand for iron ore products.

- Metallurgical Coal

- Production for the September 2004 quarter was 9.3 million tonnes, two per cent higher than the September 2003 quarter. This mainly reflects record production at Queensland Coal (Australia) underpinned by strong customer demand for metallurgical coal. This was partly offset by lower production from Illawarra Coal (Australia), largely due to a longwall changeout at Appin and Elouera and industrial activity at Elouera. Production was in line with the June 2004 quarter.

- Manganese ore

- Ore production for the September 2004 quarter was a record 1.4 million tonnes, 20 per cent higher than the September 2003 quarter and three percent higher than the June 2004 quarter. This reflects our ability to increase production, mainly at our Australian operations to meet strong customer demand in all markets, particularly China, Japan and Europe.

- Manganese alloys -

Production for the September quarter of 195,000 tonnes was 33 per cent higher than the September 2003 quarter. Production in the September 2003 quarter was affected by a fire in the Metalloy's South plant in South Africa. Production was in line with the June 2004 quarter.

• **Hot briquetted iron -**

Production remains suspended at the Boodarie Iron plant (Australia) following a gas explosion in May 2004. A number of investigations into the incident are continuing.

• **Diamonds**

- Production of 1.0 million carats at Ekati was 36 per cent lower than the September 2003 quarter and 19 per cent lower than the June 2004 quarter. This decrease primarily reflects processing of lower grade ore in the September 2004 quarter after mining of a high grade zone in the Koala pipe was completed in the June 2004 quarter.

• **Energy Coal**

- Production for the September 2004 quarter was 23.2 million tonnes, 10 per cent higher than the September 2003 quarter. This primarily reflects the ramp up of production at Mt Arthur Coal (Australia) and improved operational performance at Ingwe (South Africa). September 2003 quarter production was also impacted by a longwall move at New Mexico Coal's (USA) San Juan mine. Production was eight per cent higher than the June 2004 quarter, primarily reflecting improved operational performance at Ingwe. Production in the June 2004 quarter was also impacted by two planned major dragline outages at the Navajo mine and a longwall move at the San Juan mine at New Mexico Coal.

• **Nickel**

- Production for the September 2004 quarter was 19,600 tonnes, five per cent lower than the September 2003 quarter. This mainly reflects lower production at Cerro Matoso (Colombia) due to ore variations and unseasonably heavy rain, along with conversion of work in process inventories to finished goods at Yabulu (Australia) in the September 2003 quarter. Production was in line with the June 2004 quarter.

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

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			QUARTER ENDED			QUARTER ENDED		% CHANGE	
								SEP Q04	SEP Q04
			SEPT	JUNE	SEPT	SEPT	SEPT	vs	vs
			2003	2004	2004	2004	2003	SEP Q03	JUN Q04
PETROLEUM									
	Crude oil & condensate	('000 bbl)	15,512	13,297	12,366	12,366	15,512	-20%	-7%
	Natural gas	(bcf)	85.19	85.11	75.85	75.85	85.19	-11%	-11%
	LPG	('000 tonnes)	199.33	235.86	214.93	214.93	199.33	8%	-9%
	Ethane	('000 tonnes)	27.32	25.14	27.75	27.75	27.32	2%	10%
	Total Petroleum Products	(million boe)	32.13	30.32	27.63	27.63	32.13	-14%	-9%
ALUMINIUM									
	Alumina	('000 tonnes)	1,053	1,059	1,000	1,000	1,053	-5%	-6%
	Aluminium	('000 tonnes)	282	333	339	339	282	20%	2%
BASE METALS									
	Copper	('000 tonnes)	214.5	272.6	248.8	248.8	214.5	16%	-9%
	Lead	(tonnes)	59,364	64,472	64,910	64,910	59,364	9%	1%
	Zinc	(tonnes)	49,094	29,038	23,851	23,851	49,094	-51%	-18%
	Gold	(ounces)	29,170	31,145	30,132	30,132	29,170	3%	-3%
	Silver	('000 ounces)	10,596	11,053	11,769	11,769	10,596	11%	6%
	Molybdenum	(tonnes)	325	240	323	323	325	-1%	35%
CARBON STEEL MATERIALS									
	Iron ore	('000 tonnes)	20,870	20,537	22,545	22,545	20,870	8%	10%
	Metallurgical coal	('000 tonnes)	9,099	9,284	9,277	9,277	9,099	2%	0%
	Manganese ores	('000 tonnes)	1,153	1,337	1,379	1,379	1,153	20%	3%

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	Manganese alloys	('000 tonnes)	147	203	195	195	147	33%	-4%
	Hot briquetted iron	('000 tonnes)	496	294	-	-	496	-100%	-100%
DIAMONDS AND SPECIALTY PRODUCTS									
	Diamonds	('000 carats)	1,552	1,211	986	986	1,552	-36%	-19%
ENERGY COAL									
	Energy coal	('000 tonnes)	21,134	21,494	23,245	23,245	21,134	10%	8%
STAINLESS STEEL MATERIALS									
	Nickel	('000 tonnes)	20.6	19.9	19.6	19.6	20.6	-5%	-2%
	Ferrochrome	('000 tonnes)	227	264	265	265	227	17%	0%

BHP BILLITON ATTRIBUTABLE PRODUCTION			QUARTER ENDED					QUARTER ENDED	
		BHP Billiton	SEPT	DEC	MARCH	JUNE	SEPT	SEPT	SEPT
		Interest	2003	2003	2004	2004	2004	2004	2003
PETROLEUM									
Production									
	Crude oil & condensate	(000 bbl)	15,512	14,877	14,341	13,297	12,366	12,366	15,512
	Natural gas	(bcf)	85.19	77.57	76.47	85.11	75.85	75.85	85.19
	LPG	('000 tonnes)	199.33	200.51	217.83	235.86	214.93	214.93	199.33
	Ethane	('000 tonnes)	27.32	25.25	16.59	25.14	27.75	27.75	27.32
	Total Petroleum Products	(million boe)	32.13	30.24	29.78	30.32	27.63	27.63	32.13
ALUMINIUM									

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ALUMINA									
Production ('000 tonnes)									
	Worsley	86%	699	700	704	696	663	663	699
	Suriname	45%	227	230	228	233	223	223	227
	Alumar	36%	127	120	130	130	114	114	127
	Total		1,053	1,050	1,062	1,059	1,000	1,000	1,053
ALUMINIUM									
Production ('000 tonnes)									
	Hillside	100%	135	151	169	167	173	173	135
	Bayside	100%	47	46	45	46	46	46	47
	Alumar	46.3%	31	36	44	45	44	44	31
	Valesul	45.5%	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
	Mozal	47%	58	64	64	64	65	65	58
	Total		282	308	333	333	339	339	282
BASE METALS (a)									
COPPER									
Payable metal in concentrate ('000 tonnes)									
	Escondida	57.5%	115.9	109.1	130.8	159.1	142.5	142.5	115.9
	Tintaya (b)	100%	-	15.0	22.9	19.6	14.6	14.6	-
	Antamina	33.8%	16.9	20.5	24.6	29.9	29.9	29.9	16.9
	Highland Valley Copper (c)	33.6%	14.1	14.2	-	-	-	-	14.1
	Selbaie (d)	100%	1.6	1.8	0.8	-	-	-	1.6
	Total		148.5	160.6	179.1	208.6	187.0	187.0	148.5
Cathode ('000 tonnes)									
	Escondida	57.5%	21.4	21.8	21.7	21.8	21.9	21.9	21.4
	Cerro Colorado	100%	33.1	33.0	28.1	31.3	28.3	28.3	33.1
	Tintaya (b)	100%	9.0	9.0	9.3	8.7	9.3	9.3	9.0
	Pinto Valley	100%	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.5
	Total		66.0	66.2	61.5	64.0	61.8	61.8	66.0
LEAD									
Payable metal in concentrate (tonnes)									

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	Cannington	100%	59,364	55,211	70,838	64,472	64,910	64,910	59,364
	Total		59,364	55,211	70,838	64,472	64,910	64,910	59,364
ZINC									
Payable metal in concentrate (tonnes)									
	Cannington	100%	14,850	11,692	13,589	13,493	10,968	10,968	14,850
	Antamina	33.8%	27,933	27,026	19,099	15,545	12,883	12,883	27,933
	Selbaie (d)	100%	6,311	7,194	2,506	-	-	-	6,311
	Total		49,094	45,912	35,194	29,038	23,851	23,851	49,094
	Refer footnotes on page 4.								
BASE METALS (continued)									
GOLD									
Payable metal in concentrate (ounces)									
	Escondida	57.5%	25,016	24,833	27,492	26,044	25,370	25,370	25,016
	Tintaya (b)	100%	-	2,658	4,009	5,101	4,762	4,762	-
	Selbaie (d)	100%	3,129	3,428	1,413	-	-	-	3,129
	Highland Valley Copper (c)	33.6%	1,025	1,166	-	-	-	-	1,025
	Total		29,170	32,085	32,914	31,145	30,132	30,132	29,170
SILVER									
Payable metal in concentrate ('000 ounces)									
	Cannington	100%	9,177	8,287	10,485	9,471	10,339	10,339	9,177
	Escondida	57.5%	561	550	614	720	604	604	561
	Antamina	33.8%	435	494	588	662	692	692	435
	Tintaya (b)	100.0%	-	170	239	200	134	134	-
	Highland Valley Copper (c)	33.6%	160	163	-	-	-	-	160
	Selbaie (d)	100%	263	316	138	-	-	-	263
	Total		10,596	9,980	12,064	11,053	11,769	11,769	10,596

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MOLYBDENUM									
Payable metal in concentrate (tonnes)									
	Antamina	33.8%							