

BHP BILLITON LTD
Form 6-K
July 26, 2013

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, DC 20549

FORM 6-K

REPORT OF FOREIGN PRIVATE ISSUER

Pursuant to Rule 13a-16 or 15d-16 of

the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

July 25, 2013

<u>Commission File Number</u>	<u>Translation of registrant's name into English; Address of principal executive offices</u>
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	BHP Billiton Limited (ABN 49 004 028 077) 180 LONSDALE STREET, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA 3000 AUSTRALIA
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-	BHP Billiton Plc (REG. NO. 3196209) NEATHOUSE PLACE, VICTORIA, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM
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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

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information to the Commission pursuant to Rule 12g3-2(b) under the
Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Yes No

If "Yes" is marked, indicate below the file number assigned to the
registrant in connection with Rule 12g3-2(b): 82-

NEWS RELEASE

Release Time:
IMMEDIATE

Date:
25 July 2013

Number:
17/13

BHP BILLITON APPROVES ESCONDIDA WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

BHP Billiton today approved an investment of US\$1,972 million (BHP Billiton share) to sustain operations at Escondida in Chile, by constructing a new 2,500 litre per second sea-water desalination facility.

The project will ensure continued water supply to Escondida, as water use increases upon completion of the 152,000 tonne per day OGP1 copper concentrator.

Construction of the new desalination facility will commence in July 2013 and will include the development of two pipelines, four high pressure pump stations, a reservoir at the mine site and high voltage infrastructure to support the system. The new facility will be commissioned in 2017.

BHP Billiton Copper President, Peter Beaven, said: "Securing a sustainable water supply in the Atacama Desert is a major priority for all Chilean copper producers, so the approval of the Escondida Water Supply project is a significant milestone for our business. The new desalination facility will minimise our reliance on the region's aquifers, which will help us to meet our environmental commitments and enable us to achieve our long-term business strategy."

Escondida is located 3,100 meters above sea level, 170km South-East of the City of Antofagasta. It is owned by BHP Billiton (57.5%), Rio Tinto (30.0%), JECO Corporation (10.0%) and JECO 2 Ltd (2.5%). BHP Billiton operates the Escondida mine.

Further information on BHP Billiton can be found at: www.bhpbilliton.com.

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Members of the BHP Billiton Group which 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.

Date : July 25, 2013

BHP Billiton Limited (ABN 49 004 028 077) BHP Billiton
Plc (REG. NO. 3196209)

By: /s/ Jane McAloon
Name: Jane McAloon
Title: Group Company Secretary