

BHP BILLITON LTD
Form 6-K
September 24, 2010

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

September 24, 2010

| <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 24 September 2010

Number 25/10

**BHP BILLITON APPROVES MACEDON GAS DEVELOPMENT
IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

BHP Billiton today announced approval for development of the Macedon gas field in the Exmouth Sub-basin, Western Australia.

The Macedon Gas Development, to be operated by BHP Billiton, will commercialise natural gas from offshore production lease WA-42-L, located 100 kilometres west of Onslow. First production is expected during calendar year 2013. Recoverable reserves for the Macedon field are between 400 and 750 billion cubic feet of gas. Project costs will be approximately US\$1.5 billion, of which BHP Billiton's share will be 71.43 percent (approximately US\$1,050 million). The balance will be invested by joint venture partner Apache Northwest with a 28.57 percent interest.

The Macedon project involves four offshore production wells supplying a wet gas pipeline to an onshore gas treatment plant to be constructed at Ashburton North, 17 kilometres south west of Onslow. A sales gas pipeline will be connected to the Dampier to Bunbury Natural Gas Pipeline for sale to the domestic gas market in Western Australia. The gas plant will have a design capacity of 200 million standard cubic feet per day.

J. Michael Yeager, Chief Executive BHP Billiton Petroleum said today that the Macedon project would be an important addition to the Company's portfolio of Western Australian projects.

"Macedon will be a valuable asset for our Company and will improve the security for domestic gas supplies in both the short and medium term for Western Australia. It will be the first development in the important Ashburton North area and will make a strong contribution to the overall growth of our Petroleum operations in Western Australia" he said.

Proposals to develop the project were subject to a comprehensive environmental assessment process that involved extensive consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders.

The Macedon Gas Development will build on BHP Billiton's existing producing interests in the north west region of Australia including its operated Stybarrow and Pyrenees projects and non-operated North West Shelf Venture.

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

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Registered in Australia
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BHP Billiton Plc Registration number 3196209
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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 : September 24, 2010

BHP Billiton Limited (ABN 49 004 028 077)

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