

BHP BILLITON LTD
Form 6-K
August 10, 2011

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

August 09, 2011

| <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:
9 August 2011

Number:
23/11

BHP BILLITON TO ACQUIRE HWE MINING SUBSIDIARIES

BHP Billiton has signed a Heads of Agreement with Leighton Holdings to acquire the HWE Mining subsidiaries that provide contract mining services to its Western Australia Iron Ore operations. The Heads of Agreement relates to the mining equipment, people and related assets that service the Area C, Yandi and Orebody 23/25 operations. These operations collectively account for almost 70 per cent of Western Australia Iron Ore's total material movement. The purchase price is US\$735 million (A\$705 million), subject to working capital adjustments.

BHP Billiton President Iron Ore, Ian Ashby said: "While this move to an owner-operator model will remove a layer of complexity and costs from our business, the real focus of this proposed transaction is the work force. Transitioning to owner operator in this way, rather than by replacing contractors through direct recruitment, is a lower risk strategy as it would be challenging to replace the highly skilled and long serving HWE employees in the current environment."

The proposed acquisition is consistent with BHP Billiton's previously stated intention to move the Western Australia Iron Ore business from contract mining to owner-operator mining. Subject to due diligence, definitive agreements and relevant internal and regulatory approvals, the transaction is expected to close during the fourth quarter of calendar year 2011.

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

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BHP Billiton Limited ABN 49 004 028 077

Registered in Australia

Registered Office: 180 Lonsdale Street

Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia

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BHP Billiton Plc Registration number 3196209

Registered in England and Wales

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Members of the BHP Billiton Group which is headquartered in Australia

SIGNATURES

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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 : August 09, 2011

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