

RIO TINTO PLC
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and BHP Billiton Limited

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NEWS RELEASE

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BHP BILLITON OFFER FOR RIO TINTO LAPSES

BHP Billiton notes the statement made by the UK Takeover Panel Executive agreeing that pre-condition (A) to BHP Billiton's offer for Rio Tinto plc cannot now be satisfied and that, as a result, the UK offer period with respect to Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton ceased with immediate effect. Accordingly, BHP Billiton notes that its offer for Rio Tinto plc has now lapsed and that, given the inter-conditionality of its offers for Rio Tinto plc and Rio Tinto Limited, its offer for Rio Tinto Limited has also now lapsed.

BHP Billiton therefore also announces that it is withdrawing its official competition filing (Form CO) from the European Commission and will withdraw its Registration Statement on Form F-4 from the United States Securities and Exchange Commission.

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

Australia

Samantha Evans, Media Relations
Tel: +61 3 9609 2898 Mobile: +61 400 693 915
email: Samantha.Evans@bhpbilliton.com

Peter Ogden, Media Relations
Tel: +61 3 9609 2812 Mobile: +61 428 599 190
Email: Peter.Ogden@bhpbilliton.com

United Kingdom & South Africa

Andre Liebenberg, Investor Relations
Tel: +44 20 7802 4131 Mobile: +44 7920 236 974
email: Andre.Liebenberg@bhpbilliton.com

Illtud Harri, Media Relations
Tel: +44 20 7802 4195 Mobile: +44 7920 237 246
email: Illtud.Harri@bhpbilliton.com

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Leng Lau, Investor Relations

Tel: +61 3 9609 4202 Mobile: +61 403 533 706

email: Leng.Y.Lau@bhpbilliton.com

United States

Scott Espenshade, Investor Relations

Tel: +1 713 599 6431 Mobile: +1 713 208 8565

email: Scott.Espenshade@bhpbilliton.com

Ruban Yogarajah, Media Relations

Tel: US +1 713 966 2907 or UK +44 20 7802 4033

Mobile: UK +44 7827 082 022

email: Ruban.Yogarajah@bhpbilliton.com

BHP Billiton Limited ABN 49 004 028 077

Registered in Australia

Registered Office: 180 Lonsdale Street

Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia

Tel +61 1300 55 4757 Fax +61 3 9609 3015

BHP Billiton Plc Registration number 3196209

Registered in England and Wales

Neathouse Place

London SW1V 1BH United Kingdom

Tel +44 20 7802 4000 Fax +44 20 7802 4111

A member of the BHP Billiton group which is headquartered in Australia

Important Notice

The directors of BHP Billiton Limited and BHP Billiton Plc (BHP Billiton) accept responsibility for the information contained in this release. Having taken all reasonable care to ensure that such is the case, the information contained in this release is, to the best of the knowledge and belief of the directors of BHP Billiton, in accordance with the facts and contains no omission likely to affect its import.

Information Relating to the US Offer for Rio Tinto plc

In connection with the offer and sale of securities BHP Billiton would issue to Rio Tinto plc US shareholders and Rio Tinto plc ADS holders, BHP Billiton has filed with the SEC a Registration Statement on Form F-4 (the Registration Statement), which contains a preliminary prospectus (the Prospectus), and will file additional relevant materials with the SEC. This communication is not a substitute for the Registration Statement or the Prospectus that BHP Billiton has filed, or any amendments or supplements to those documents BHP Billiton may file, with the SEC.

U.S. INVESTORS AND U.S. HOLDERS OF RIO TINTO PLC SECURITIES AND ALL HOLDERS OF RIO TINTO PLC ADSs ARE URGED TO READ THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT, THE PROSPECTUS AND ANY OTHER DOCUMENTS MADE AVAILABLE TO THEM AND/OR FILED WITH THE SEC REGARDING THE POTENTIAL TRANSACTION, AS WELL AS ANY AMENDMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTS TO THOSE DOCUMENTS, WHEN THEY BECOME AVAILABLE BECAUSE THEY WILL CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

Investors and security holders are able to obtain a free copy of the Registration Statement and the Prospectus as well as other relevant documents filed with the SEC at the SEC 's website (<http://www.sec.gov>). Copies of such documents may also be obtained from BHP Billiton without charge.

Information for US Holders of Rio Tinto Limited Shares

BHP Billiton Limited is not required to, and does not plan to, prepare and file with the SEC a registration statement in respect of the Rio Tinto Limited Offer. Accordingly, Rio Tinto Limited shareholders should carefully consider the following:

The Rio Tinto Limited Offer will be an exchange offer made for the securities of a foreign company. Such offer is subject to disclosure requirements of a foreign country that are different from those of the United States. Financial statements included in the document will be prepared in accordance with foreign accounting standards that may not be comparable to the financial statements of United States companies.

Information Relating to the US Offer for Rio Tinto plc and the Rio Tinto Limited Offer for Rio Tinto shareholders located in the US

It may be difficult for you to enforce your rights and any claim you may have arising under the U.S. federal securities laws, since the issuers are located in a foreign country, and some or all of their officers and directors may be residents of foreign countries. You may not be able to sue a foreign company or its officers or directors in a foreign court for violations of the U.S. securities laws. It may be difficult to compel a foreign company and its affiliates to subject themselves to a U.S. court 's judgment.

You should be aware that BHP Billiton may purchase securities of either Rio Tinto plc or Rio Tinto Limited otherwise than under the exchange offer, such as in open market or privately negotiated purchases.