

BHP BILLITON PLC  
Form 6-K  
October 24, 2003

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

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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

23 October 2003

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):

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Date                    23 October 2003

Number 31/03

BHP BILLITON PRODUCTION REPORT  
FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2003

BHP Billiton today released its production report for the quarter ended 30 September 2003.

- **Record quarterly Western Australian Iron Ore production of 22.0 million tonnes and record quarterly despatches of 21.5 million tonnes (100 per cent basis).**
- **Record quarterly Aluminium production resulting from early commissioning of the Mozal 2 expansion in Mozambique.**
- **Copper production lower than June 2003 quarter due to processing of higher grade ore during the June 2003 quarter at Escondida (Chile) and a lower quantity of ore milled at Antamina (Peru).**
- **Escondida to return to its normal mine plan and production profile commencing January 2004.**
- **Richards Bay Minerals (South Africa) sales volumes materially lower than the June 2003 quarter due to significantly weaker market conditions.**

- **Total Petroleum Products**

- Total production for the September 2003 quarter was 32 million barrels of oil equivalent, six per cent higher than the June 2003 quarter and three per cent lower than the September 2002 quarter.

- ◆ Oil and Condensate - Production for the September 2003 quarter was 15.5 million barrels, 16 per cent lower than the 18.6 million barrels produced in the September 2002 quarter, mainly due to natural field decline in Laminaria (Australia), Bass Strait and Griffin (Australia). This was partly offset by increased production at Liverpool Bay (UK) and the Bruce and Keith fields (UK) due to scheduled maintenance shutdowns in the September 2002 quarter. Production was in line with the 15.6 million barrels produced in the June 2003 quarter, reflecting natural field decline across the portfolio which was largely offset by increased condensate production from Bass Strait (Australia) as a result of increased gas demand.

- ◆ Natural Gas - Production for the September 2003 quarter was 85.2 billion cubic feet, 19 per cent higher than the 71.9 billion cubic feet produced in the September 2002 quarter due to the commissioning of Zamzama Phase 1, along with increased production at Liverpool Bay and the Bruce and Keith fields due to scheduled maintenance shutdowns in the September 2002 quarter. Production for the quarter was 17 per cent higher than the 72.9 billion cubic feet produced in the June 2003 quarter. This was due to seasonally driven increased demand for Bass Strait natural gas plus increased production from Zamzama (Pakistan) following the successful commissioning of the Phase 1 project. This was partly offset by seasonally lower demand of Liverpool Bay gas.

- **Alumina -**

Production for the September 2003 quarter was 1.1 million tonnes, in line with both the September 2002 and June 2003 quarters. Higher production at Alumar (Brazil) following scheduled maintenance during the June 2003 quarter, was offset by lower production at Worsley (Australia), where stockpiled hydrate was processed in the June 2003 quarter.

- **Aluminium**

- Production for the September 2003 quarter was a record 282,000 tonnes, compared with 268,000 tonnes in the September 2002 quarter and 273,000 tonnes in the June 2003 quarter. The increase mainly reflects the ramp up of production from the Mozal 2 (Mozambique) expansion, which reached full commissioning in August 2003, seven months ahead of schedule. This was partly offset by lower production at Alumar (Brazil) following an electrical outage in July 2003.

- **Copper -**

- Production for the September 2003 quarter was 214,500 tonnes, 16 per cent higher than in the September 2002 quarter, reflecting additional production from the Escondida (Chile) Phase IV expansion, which commenced commercial production in October 2002. This was partly offset by processing a lower quantity of material at Antamina (Peru) while access to ore is restricted to the flanks of the deposit. This situation is likely to continue for the next six to nine months. Production was six per cent lower than the June 2003 quarter, mainly a result of higher head grades at Escondida during the June 2003 quarter.

- **Silver -**

- Silver sales volumes of 6.7 million ounces from Cannington (Australia) during the quarter, was 28 and 20 per cent lower than the September 2002 and June 2003 quarters respectively. This primarily reflects timing of lead concentrate shipments containing payable silver.

- **Iron Ore -**

Record quarterly Western Australian production of 22.0 million tonnes (100 per cent basis) was 14 per cent higher than the September 2002 quarter and eight per cent higher than the June 2003 quarter, a reflection of ongoing strong customer demand in all Asian markets, particularly China. A new quarterly despatch record of 21.5 million tonnes (100% basis) was also set in Western Australia during the September 2003 quarter. Total iron ore production for the September 2003 quarter was 20.9 million tonnes (BHP Billiton share), 12 and eight per cent higher than the September 2002 and June 2003 quarters, respectively.

- **Metallurgical Coal**

- Production for the September 2003 quarter of 9.1 million tonnes was five per cent higher than the September 2002 quarter due to increased customer demand from Queensland Coal (Australia), and adverse roof conditions at Crinum mine (Australia) in the September 2002 quarter. This was partly offset by lower production at Illawarra Coal (Australia) following the closure of Tower Colliery in December 2002. Production was in line with the June 2003 quarter.

- **Manganese alloys**

- Production for the September 2003 quarter of 147,000 tonnes was 16 per cent lower than the September 2002 quarter and 25 per cent lower than the June 2003 quarter. This was due to an electrical fault at the Metalloys facility in South Africa in August 2003, which resulted in operations being suspended for a period of 48 days.

- **Ekati(TM) Diamonds**

- Production of 1.55 million carats was 63 per cent higher than the September 2002 quarter, which reflects the processing of a pocket of high grade but lower quality material from the Koala pit, along with sustained benefits from the processing plant de-bottlenecking program. Production was also 19 per cent higher than the June 2003 quarter for the same reasons.

- **Titanium Minerals -**

- Sales volumes at Richards Bay Minerals were materially lower than both the September 2002 and June 2003 quarters due to significantly weaker market conditions. (Note: Due to confidentiality agreements with joint

venture partners, production figures for Richards Bay Minerals are not contained in this report.)

• **Energy Coal -**

Production for the September 2003 quarter was 21.2 million tonnes, compared with 19.3 million tonnes in the September 2002 quarter. The increase mainly reflects higher production at Mount Arthur North (Australia) where deliveries to both the export and domestic thermal coal markets are in accordance with the ramp up plan, higher production at Cerrejon Coal (Colombia) largely reflecting stronger demand from the European market and maintenance on two draglines at New Mexico Coal in the September 2002 quarter. Export sales from Ingwe decreased by five per cent, to 38 per cent of total sales volumes during the September quarter. This reflects lower export tonnage availability from Koornfontein following a fatal accident at that mine and subsequent safety interventions during the September 2003 quarter, and shipment timing.

• **Nickel**

- Production for the quarter of 20,600 tonnes was eight per cent higher than the September 2002 quarter mainly reflecting scheduled maintenance activities in the September 2002 quarter, along with benefits in the current quarter of processing enhancements arising from operating excellence initiatives at both Cerro Matoso (Colombia) and Yabulu (Australia). Production was in line with the June 2003 quarter, although sales were 18 per cent lower as a result of timing of shipments.

• **Ferrochrome**

- Production of 227,000 tonnes for the quarter was five per cent lower than the September 2002 quarter and 12 per cent lower than the June 2003 quarter. This reduction is mainly due to scheduled maintenance shut downs in the current quarter, coinciding with the high winter electricity tariff period in South Africa.

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

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BHP BILLITON PRODUCTION SUMMARY			QUARTER ENDED	QUARTER ENDED	% CHANGE

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								SEP Q03	SEP Q03
			SEPT	JUNE	SEPT	SEPT	SEPT	vs	vs
			2002	2003	2003	2003	2002	SEP Q02	JUN Q03
<b>PETROLEUM</b>									
	Crude oil & condensate	('000 bbl)	18,550	15,635	15,512	15,512	18,550	-16%	-1%
	Natural gas	(bcf)	71.86	72.91	85.19	85.19	71.86	19%	17%
	LPG	('000 tonnes)	208.96	205.57	199.33	199.33	208.96	-5%	-3%
	Ethane	('000 tonnes)	27.67	24.97	27.32	27.32	27.67	-1%	9%
	Total Petroleum Products	(million boe)	33	30	32	32	33	-3%	6%
<b>ALUMINIUM</b>									
	Alumina	('000 tonnes)	1,031	1,060	1,053	1,053	1,031	2%	-1%
	Aluminium	('000 tonnes)	268	273	282	282	268	5%	3%
<b>BASE METALS</b>									
	Copper	('000 tonnes)	184.5	229.2	214.5	214.5	184.5	16%	-6%
	Lead	(tonnes)	63,243	59,389	59,364	59,364	63,243	-6%	0%
	Zinc	(tonnes)	48,542	54,396	49,094	49,094	48,542	1%	-10%
	Gold	(ounces)	55,153	25,752	29,170	29,170	55,153	-47%	13%
	Silver	('000 ounces)	11,260	9,643	10,596	10,596	11,260	-6%	10%
	Molybdenum	(tonnes)	314	301	325	325	314	4%	8%
<b>CARBON STEEL MATERIALS</b>									
	Iron ore	('000 tonnes)	18,628	19,420	20,922	20,922	18,628	12%	8%
	Metallurgical coal	('000 tonnes)	8,650	9,026	9,099	9,099	8,650	5%	1%
	Manganese ores	('000 tonnes)	1,095	1,058	1,153	1,153	1,095	5%	9%
	Manganese alloys		175	195	147	147	175	-16%	-25%

		('000 tonnes)							
	Hot briquetted iron	('000 tonnes)	333	458	496	496	333	49%	8%
<b>DIAMONDS AND SPECIALTY PRODUCTS</b>									
	Diamonds	('000 carats)	954	1,300	1,552	1,552	954	63%	19%
<b>ENERGY COAL</b>									
	Energy coal	('000 tonnes)	19,329	21,991	21,156	21,156	19,329	9%	-4%
<b>STAINLESS STEEL MATERIALS</b>									
	Nickel	('000 tonnes)	19.1	21.0	20.6	20.6	19.1	8%	-2%
	Ferrochrome	('000 tonnes)	238	259	227	227	238	-5%	-12%
Throughout this report figures in italics indicate adjustments made since the figure was previously reported.									
<b>BHP BILLITON ATTRIBUTABLE PRODUCTION</b>									
			QUARTER ENDED					QUARTER ENDED	
		BHP Billiton	SEPT	DEC	MARCH	JUNE	SEPT	SEPT	SEPT
		Interest	2002	2002	2003	2003	2003	2003	2002
<b>PETROLEUM</b>									
Production									
	Crude oil & condensate	(000 bbl)	18,550	16,398	15,310	15,635	15,512	15,512	18,550
	Natural gas	(bcf)	71.86	69.41	66.99	72.91	85.19	85.19	71.86
	LPG	('000 tonnes)	208.96	167.97	160.62	205.57	199.33	199.33	208.96
	Ethane	('000 tonnes)	27.67	19.91	22.35	24.97	27.32	27.32	27.67
	Total Petroleum Products	(million boe)	33	30	28	30	32	32	33

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<b>ALUMINIUM</b>									
<b>ALUMINA</b>									
Production ('000 tonnes)									
	Worsley	86%	698	662	658	724	699	699	698
	Suriname	45%	221	213	222	223	227	227	221
	Alumar	36%	112	123	123	113	127	127	112
	Total		1,031	998	1,003	1,060	1,053	1,053	1,031
<b>ALUMINIUM</b>									
Production ('000 tonnes)									
	Hillside	100%	135	134	133	132	135	135	135
	Bayside	100%	46	45	48	46	47	47	46
	Alumar	46.3%	44	44	45	45	31	31	44
	Valesul	45.5%	11	11	10	11	11	11	11
	Mozal	47%	32	32	31	39	58	58	32
	Total		268	266	267	273	282	282	268
<b>BASE METALS (a)</b>									
<b>COPPER</b>									
Payable metal in concentrate ('000 tonnes)									
	Escondida (b)	57.5%	68.4	105.6	118.5	126.6	115.9	115.9	68.4
	Tintaya (b)	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Antamina	33.8%	25.7	26.4	23.6	21.2	16.9	16.9	25.7
	Alumbra (c)	25%	11.1	13.4	9.9	-	-	-	11.1
	Highland Valley Copper	33.6%	14.9	14.3	13.2	13.8	14.1	14.1	14.9
	Selbaie	100%	2.8	2.1	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.6	2.8
	Total		122.9	161.8	166.9	163.4	148.5	148.5	122.9
Cathode ('000 tonnes)									
	Escondida	57.5%	17.9	19.1	20.4	21.1	21.4	21.4	17.9
	Cerro Colorado	100%	32.5	33.1	32.5	33.0	33.1	33.1	32.5
	Tintaya (b)	100%	8.4	8.9	9.0	9.1	9.0	9.0	8.4
	Pinto Valley	100%	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.8
	Total		61.6	63.8	64.4	65.8	66.0	66.0	61.6

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<b>LEAD</b>									
Payable metal in concentrate (tonnes)									
	Cannington	100%	61,676	57,651	58,711	59,389	59,364	59,364	61,676
	Pering (d)	100%	1,567	694	354	-	-	-	1,567
	Total		63,243	58,345	59,065	59,389	59,364	59,364	63,243
	Refer footnotes on page 4.								
<b>BASE METALS (continued)</b>									
<b>ZINC</b>									
Payable metal in concentrate (tonnes)									
	Cannington	100%	15,182	14,721	15,480	18,479	14,850	14,850	15,182
	Antamina	33.8%	18,189	15,424	20,519	28,553	27,933	27,933	18,189
	Selbaie	100%	9,840	6,540	6,421	7,364	6,311	6,311	9,840
	Pering (d)	100%	5,331	7,430	4,335	-	-	-	5,331
	Total		48,542	44,115	46,755	54,396	49,094	49,094	48,542
<b>GOLD</b>									
Payable metal in concentrate (ounces)									
	Escondida (b)	57.5%	10,074	15,936	17,458	20,664	25,016	25,016	10,074
	Tintaya (b)	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Alumbraera (c)	25%	39,279	46,940	35,084	-	-	-	39,279
	Selbaie	100%	4,486	5,069	4,146	4,081	3,129	3,129	4,486
	Highland Valley Copper	33.6%	1,314	1,230	1,114	1,007	1,025	1,025	1,314
	Total		55,153	69,175	57,802	25,752	29,170	29,170	55,153
<b>SILVER</b>									
Payable metal in concentrate ('000 ounces)									
	Cannington	100%	9,612	8,326	8,773	8,161	9,177	9,177	9,612
	Escondida	57.5%	304	387	471	538	561	561	304
	Antamina	33.8%	536	557	617	517	435	435	536
	Alumbraera (c)	25.0%	53	72	75	-	-	-	53



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	Highland Valley Copper	33.6%	162	159	140	143	160	160	162
	Selbaie	100%	593	369	279	284	263	263	593
	Total		11,260	9,870	10,355	9,643	10,596	10,596	11,260
<b>MOLYBDENUM</b>									
Payable metal in concentrate (tonnes)									
	Antamina	33.8%	94	115	113	21	25	25	94
	Highland Valley Copper	33.6%	220	250	260	280	300	300	220
	Total		314	365	373	301	325	325	314
<b>CARBON STEEL MATERIALS</b>									
<b>IRON ORE</b>									
Production ('000 tonnes)									