

BHP BILLITON LTD
Form 6-K
June 22, 2012

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

June 22, 2012

| <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:
22 June 2012

Number:
14/12

APPIN AREA 9 PROJECT APPROVAL

BHP Billiton today approved investment of US\$845 million to sustain operations at Illawarra Coal, in southern New South Wales, Australia by establishing a replacement mining area at the Appin Mine.

The replacement area will have a production capacity of 3.5 million tonnes per year of metallurgical coal and will sustain Illawarra Coal's production capacity at 9 million tonnes per year. Appin Area 9 will be operational in 2016 and will replace production at the West Cliff Mine. The project includes roadway development, new ventilation infrastructure, new and reconfigured conveyors and other mine services.

The development has received all necessary regulatory approvals.

BHP Billiton Metallurgical Coal President, Hubie van Dalsen, said: "The investment sustains Illawarra Coal's production rates and recognises the value of its high quality metallurgical coal resources.

"It is also good news for local jobs and the economy in the region."

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

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Registered in 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

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 : June 22, 2012

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