BHP BILLITON LTD
Form 6-K
January 04, 2006

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

Form 6-K

REPORT OF FOREIGN PRIVATE ISSUER
PURSUANT TO RULE 13a-16 OR 15d-16
UNDER THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

October

20, 2005

BHP Billiton

Limited

---------- (Translation of registrant's name into English) 180 Lonsdale Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia

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(Address of principal executive office)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant files or will file annual reports under cover of Form 20-F or Form 40-F: [x] 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 information to the Commission pursuant to Rule 12g3-2(b) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934: [ ] Yes [x] No

If "Yes" is marked, indicate below the file number assigned to the registrant in connection with Rule 12g3-2(b): n/a

20 October 2005
Number 41/05

BHP BILLITON APPROVES SAMARCO EXPANSION

BHP Billiton today announced approval of the Samarco Third Pellet Plant project in Brazil. The project will increase annual iron ore pellet production capacity by 7.6 million tonnes to 21.6 million tonnes per annum (100% basis), at a cost of US$590 million (BHP Billiton share). First pellet production is expected in the first half of calendar year 2008.

BHP Billiton's President Iron Ore, Graeme Hunt, said: "This expansion is consistent with our strategy of maintaining our position in growing iron ore markets. Samarco is a low cost supplier of seaborne pellets with a strong customer base. Investment in a third pellet plant will consolidate its strong market position and will enhance BHP Billiton's exposure to the important iron ore pellet market."

Construction on the Third Pellet Plant project will commence immediately and will include:

- Additional mining capacity and a new concentrator at the Germano mine site;
- A second slurry pipeline of approximately 400 kms in length from Germano to Ponta Ubu; and
- A third pellet plant, additional stockyard capacity and enhanced ship loading capacity at the Ponta Ubu site.

BHP Billiton has a 50% interest in Samarco, with the remaining 50% being held by Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD).

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

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BHP Billiton Limited ABN 49 004 028 077

Registered in Australia
Registered Office: Level 27, 180 Lonsdale Street Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone +61 1300 554 757 Facsimile +61 3 9609 3015

BHP Billiton Plc Registration number 3196209

Registered in England and Wales
Registered Office: Neathouse Place London SW1V 1BH United Kingdom
Telephone +44 20 7802 4000 Facsimile +44 20 7802 4111

The BHP Billiton Group 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.

BHP Billiton Limited

Date: 20 October 2005

By: Karen Wood

Name: Karen Wood
Title: Company Secretary