

NEWS RELEASE

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BHP BILLITON ANNOUNCES EARLY TERMINATION OF HSR WAITING PERIOD FOR ITS PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF RIO TINTO

BHP Billiton today announced that the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have granted early termination of the Hart-Scott-Rodino (HSR) waiting period for BHP Billiton's proposed acquisition of Rio Tinto and the Antitrust Division of the DoJ has concluded its review without further action.

"We are very pleased that we have received notice of early termination of the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act waiting period and completion of the Department of Justice merger review," BHP Billiton's Chief Commercial Officer, Alberto Calderon said.

Termination of the applicable HSR waiting period satisfies part of the US merger control pre-condition to BHP Billiton's proposed offer for Rio Tinto. The offer remains subject to the pre-conditions as disclosed in Appendix I of the announcement on 6 February 2008, including that portion of the US merger control pre-condition referring to certain actions that may be brought by the DoJ or FTC.

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

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Important Notices

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

BHP Billiton Limited and BHP Billiton Plc ("BHP Billiton") plan to register the offer and sale of securities it would issue to Rio Tinto plc US shareholders and Rio Tinto plc ADS holders by filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") a Registration Statement (the "Registration Statement"), which will contain a prospectus (the "Prospectus"), as well as other relevant materials. No such materials have yet been filed. This communication is not a substitute for any Registration Statement or Prospectus that 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 ANY REGISTRATION STATEMENT, 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 will be 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>), once such documents are filed with the SEC. Copies of such documents may also be obtained from BHP Billiton without charge, once they are filed with the SEC.

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.