

NEWS RELEASE

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BHP BILLITON PLEDGES A\$6 MILLION TO BUSH BLITZ II PROJECT

Alongside partners the Australian Government and Earthwatch, BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities today announced a A\$6 million contribution to the second stage of the unique species discovery program, Bush Blitz.

BHP Billiton's contribution will be matched by the Australian Government, allowing the program to run until 2017 with A\$12 million in funding.

Known as Bush Blitz II, the program involves expedition teams conducting flora and fauna surveys across Australia which deepen the scientific knowledge of the country's unique plants and animals.

Bush Blitz II will build on the success of the first stage of the program, which between 2010 and 2013 discovered more than 700 new species of plants and recorded more than 17,000 known species across 65 remote reserves across Australia. BHP Billiton committed A\$3.9 million to the first stage of the program, which brings its total investment in the program to almost A\$10 million.

BHP Billiton President, HSE, Marketing and Technology, Mike Henry, thanked Earthwatch and the Australian Government for the opportunity to be involved in the program.

"BHP Billiton supports a range of initiatives around the world that make a positive contribution to the environment and benefit the broader community," he said.

"This unique partnership combines BHP Billiton's commitments to biodiversity, environment and the communities in which operate. That's why we've extended our partnership with Bush Blitz by providing funding for the second phase of the program.

"The partnership reflects BHP Billiton's community strategy – engagement, inclusiveness and participation. This is reflected in the passion and enthusiasm of our employees who volunteer on the expeditions, and then share their knowledge and insight with colleagues in the workplace."

Mr Henry said that to date, 43 BHP Billiton employees have participated in seven expeditions.

"BHP Billiton employees act as research assistants in the field and support scientists with trapping species, collecting plant samples and processing specimens," he said.

“It is a highly regarded professional development opportunity for our people where they learn survey techniques on a wide variety of species and by the end of the expedition they have a broader understanding of Australia’s unique biodiversity and ecosystems.”

Mr Henry said support of the Bush Blitz program was consistent with BHP Billiton’s target to conserve areas of high biodiversity and ecosystem value of national or international conservation significance such as the Five Rivers Conservation Project, where a recent Bush Blitz took place.

“By participating in Bush Blitz II, our employees demonstrate our value of Sustainability and making a difference in helping to protect Australia’s environment and biodiversity,” he said.

“We have also said that we will help to build the resilience of communities and ecosystems to the impacts of climate change. By contributing to our understanding of biodiversity, the Bush Blitz program will help inform opportunities to incorporate climate change resilience considerations into conservation management and planning moving forward.”

BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities is a charity established by BHP Billiton as part of its community investment program. Most projects supported by BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities are multi-year projects and they predominately focus on building capacity of individuals and institutions, so that after the project is completed, it will leave a lasting positive legacy.

Further information on Bush Blitz can be found at: www.bushblitz.org.au.

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

Media Relations

Australia

Emily Perry
Tel: +61 3 9609 2800 Mobile: +61 477 325 803
email: Emily.Perry@bhpbilliton.com

Paul Hitchins
Tel: + 61 3 9609 2592 Mobile: + 61 419 315 001
email: Paul.Hitchins@bhpbilliton.com

Eleanor Nichols
Tel: +61 3 9609 2360 Mobile: +61 407 064 748
email: Eleanor.Nichols@bhpbilliton.com

United Kingdom

Ruban Yogarajah
Tel: +44 20 7802 4033 Mobile: +44 7827 082 022
email: Ruban.Yogarajah@bhpbilliton.com

Jennifer White
Tel: +44 20 7802 7462 Mobile: +44 7827 253 764
email: Jennifer.White@bhpbilliton.com

Americas

Ruban Yogarajah
Tel: +44 20 7802 4033 Mobile: +44 7827 082 022
email: Ruban.Yogarajah@bhpbilliton.com

BHP Billiton Limited ABN 49 004 028 077
Registered in Australia
Registered Office: Level 16, 171 Collins Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia
Tel +61 1300 55 4757 Fax +61 3 9609 3015

Investor Relations

Australia

Tara Dines
Tel: +61 3 9609 2222 Mobile: +61 499 249 005
email: Tara.Dines@bhpbilliton.com

Jodie Phillips
Tel: +61 3 9609 2069 Mobile: +61 418 710 516
email: Jodie.Phillips@bhpbilliton.com

United Kingdom and South Africa

Jonathan Price
Tel: +44 20 7802 4131 Mobile: +44 7990 527 726
email: Jonathan.H.Price@bhpbilliton.com

Dean Simon
Tel: +44 20 7802 7461 Mobile: +44 7717 511 193
email: Dean.Simon@bhpbilliton.com

Americas

James Agar
Tel: +1 212 310 1421 Mobile: +1 347 882 3011
email: James.Agar@bhpbilliton.com

Joseph Suarez
Tel: +1 212 310 1422 Mobile: +1 646 400 3803
email: Joseph.Suarez@bhpbilliton.com

BHP Billiton Plc Registration number 3196209
Registered in England and Wales
Registered Office: Neathouse Place
London SW1V 1LH United Kingdom
Tel +44 20 7802 4000 Fax +44 20 7802 4111

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