

BHP BILLITON LTD

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BHP BILLITON DECLARES FORCE MAJEURE AT BOODARIE IRON

BHP Billiton today advised that it had declared 'force majeure' on sales contracts and some supply contracts at the Boodarie Iron Plant in north Western Australia.

Production at the plant has been suspended since 12 March 2002 following a tube failure in a gas re-heating furnace. Nobody was injured in the incident (which occurred on only one production train) and all four trains were shut down pending an investigation into the cause of the failure.

Safety of personnel is the paramount consideration at all BHP Billiton operations and for this reason production will not resume until the detailed investigation and necessary rectification work is completed. Declaration of 'force majeure' will minimise cash flow losses during this period.

BHP Billiton is working with customers, suppliers and contractors to minimise disruptions and will provide further information when it becomes available. Plans to demobilise a large portion of the casual contractor workforce following the completion of technical modifications have also been brought forward and will be implemented immediately.

Recent performance of the Boodarie Iron plant had been within the forecast band for ramp-up.

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

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