

BHP BILLITON LTD AND RIO TINTO — PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

638. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I ask this question on behalf of Hon Jon Ford, who cannot be here today. I refer the Premier to the recently announced proposal for a partnership between BHP Billiton Ltd and Rio Tinto in their Pilbara iron ore operations.

- (1) When was the Premier first made aware of this proposal?
- (2) Can the Premier explain to the house the risks for Western Australia of this proposed partnership?

Hon NORMAN MOORE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Premier cannot explain this to the house, but I will endeavour to do so on his behalf.

- (1) On Friday, 5 June 2009.
- (2) It is important to remember that a significant proportion of the worldwide assets of BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto are located in Western Australia. The planned joint venture represents a major shift in the structure of our iron industry and will be closely examined to ensure that the outcomes are in the state's best interests. This process of examination will thoroughly consider all risks to the state. It would be premature to speculate on those risks at this time.