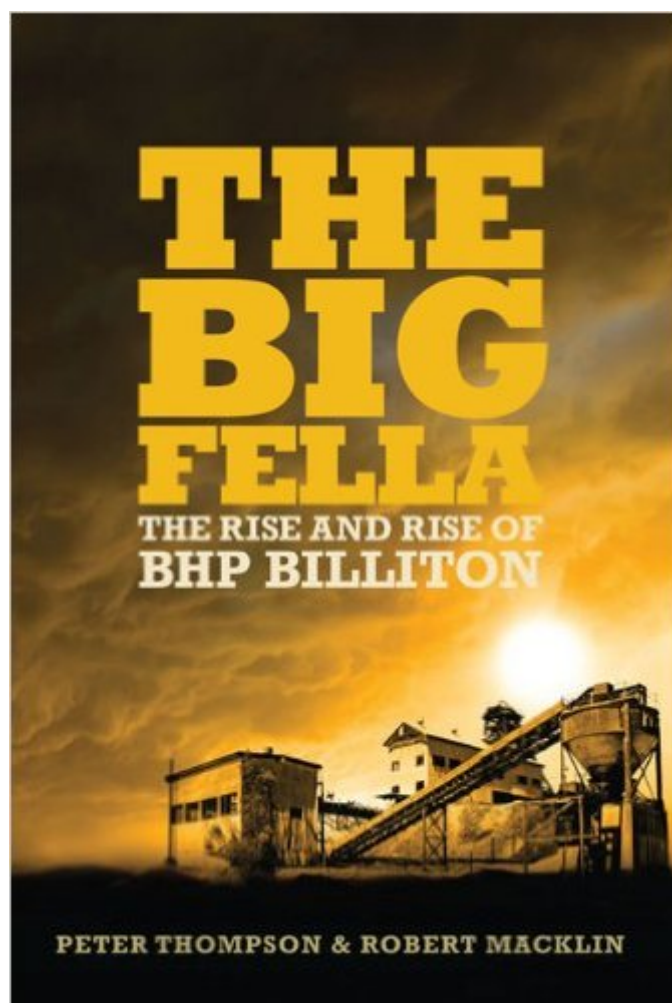


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# The Big Fella: The Rise And Rise Of BHP Billiton



## Synopsis

BHP is part of Australia's DNA; but it remains an enigma. *The Big Fella* is the compelling story of how BHP and its partner Billiton rose from the humblest beginnings in the Australian Outback and on the Indonesian island of Belitung to starry heights on the great stock exchanges of the world. Based on more than 60 exclusive interviews, it rips away the superficial gloss to expose the political and industrial forces that really drive Big Business in the 21st century. In an investigative tour de force, authors Peter Thompson and Robert Macklin reveal the visions, the schemes, the scandals and the corporate life-and-death struggles that have characterized BHP's evolution from the first lucky strike by the mysterious Charles Rasp at Broken Hill in 1883 to its merger with Billiton in 2001 to its daring \$150 billion bid for Rio Tinto six years later. The result is a gripping story of foresight and blunder, of nation-building and rampant ego, of greed and of grace, written by two master storytellers with, for the first time, access to the key players themselves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

On the far western edge of New South Wales lies a town called Silverton, where a mining boom broke out in 1880 when a lode of silver was discovered. The fever spread, and a few years later a mysterious man living under the assumed name Charles Rasp pegged a claim on the nearby Broken Hill, out of which grew the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, now BHP Billiton Ltd, Australia's largest company. The story is told in this book by Peter Thompson and Robert

Macklin. The company's story is filled with interesting twists and intrigues. Immense wealth was generated within a few years, but relations between miners and management became strained, and Broken Hill became the site of a number of industrial disputes. Before the wealth generated from the mines at Broken Hill started tapering off, the company diversified, moving into steel production, and then petroleum, copper and iron ore. In the past decade BHP merged with Billiton to form the largest mining company in the world. Much of the story relates to takeover battles and corporate changes which have occurred in the recent past and, although many of the details have been reported in the press, the book gives a more detailed and engaging insight into what went on behind corporate doors. In my view, the authors spend a bit too much time telling the reader that they are revealing particular facts "for the first time", but the book tells a great story which any reader can enjoy.

I was hoping to learn more about the business. This book seems to be more about backroom office politics. Not that interesting if you are not in the industry.

Wish there was more description of mining technology and marketing of each natural resource they deal in. More description of geology would also be a plus.

I was very impressed by the board-level interviews that gave a clear picture into the politics / issues behind pursuing different strategies.

Very well written!

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