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# PAGET FIRM IN STRIFE AS CAMPAIGN TO SAVE 200 JOBS BEGINS

## HMG Westhill is in administrator's hands and it must be sold to protect hundreds of workers

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PAGET engineering heavy-weight HMG Westhill has gone into voluntary administration and must be sold off quickly if there's to be any hope of its survival.

The Westhill subsidiary of the Heavy Maintenance Group (HMG) had KordaMentha appointed on June 24, with the administrators moving in to help manage the company at its Paget base that afternoon.

In September last year, the

company was expanding into a 15,000sq m workshop on Commercial Avenue but by late November, it became one of the first companies to cut staff, laying off 28 people as the financial crisis tightened its grip on the region.

The administrators will now sell the company as a whole, hopefully preserving all 200 staff in the process, but if that fails the company could be sold off as separate pieces.

The company has four bases: a workshop on David Muir Street, Slade Point; a giant

"bucketshop" on Ron Searle Drive, near Mackay Harbour, which repairs mining buckets for BMA; an office in Mt Isa; and its massive workshop in Paget.

Westhill described itself as "one of the largest and most comprehensive heavy engineering companies in Central Queensland" after it joined with HMG in late 2007.

A Westhill spokesperson said the company was plagued by financial issues even as it expanded.

"Westhill has struggled to

remain profitable over the past two years and has repeatedly needed financial support," the spokesperson said.

"The decision to appoint an administrator had no implications for the rest of the group, which includes HMG Hardchrome and ATMR."

The spokesperson for KordaMentha's administration of Westhill, who will sell off the business, said it was "business as usual" for the engineering firm, which has three bases in

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