



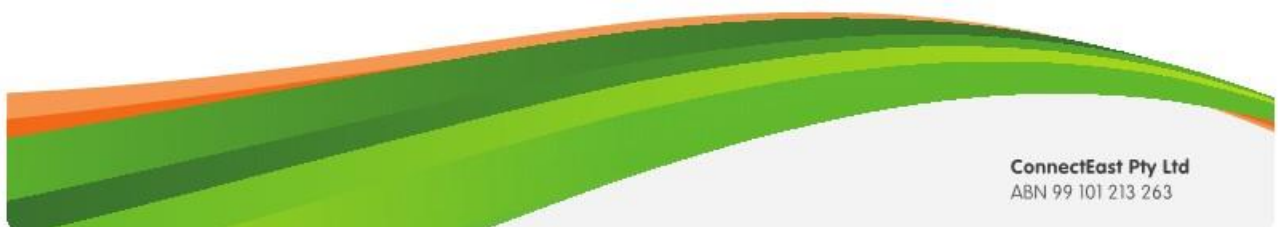
EastLink
Time better spent.

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EASTLINK CUSTOMER ADVOCATE REPORT

Q3 2025 (1 JULY 2025 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2025)



ConnectEast Pty Ltd
ABN 99 101 213 263

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1. EASTLINK CUSTOMER ADVOCATE'S MESSAGE

17 October 2025

This report covers the Q3 2025 quarterly period (1 July 2025 – 30 September 2025).

For the fifth consecutive quarter, the number of cases raised in Q3 2025 (34 cases) was much lower than the nominal case rate (50-60 cases per quarter). The trend from Q3 2024 to Q2 2025 which suggested a return towards the nominal case rate has been reversed in Q3 2025.

The elapsed time to close ECA cases during Q3 2025 (2.7 calendar days) was slightly higher than the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (2.5 calendar days).

Two cases in Q3 2025 took a relatively long time to close (both taking 13 calendar days). Excluding these two cases, the average time to close ECA cases during Q3 2025 would fall to just 2.1 calendar days.

65% of the cases raised during Q3 2025 related to toll invoices, which is higher than the longer term average for this case type over the preceding seven quarters (54%). However, there is no indication of a specific or systemic customer service failure contributing to this increase. Of the 22 cases raised in relation to toll invoices during Q3 2025, there was a broad range of outcomes.

The total amount of refunds and credits during Q3 2025 (\$367) was less than half of the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (\$907)

The following hardship assistance data is sourced from EastLink's hardship team:

- > The number of payment plans created during Q3 2025 (1,373 plans created) was 20% higher than the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (1,140 plans created), and was the highest number recorded in any quarter. The average value of payment plan created during Q3 2025 (\$312) was 10% higher than the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (\$284).
- > The number of fines withdrawn by EastLink due to hardship during Q3 2025 (1,827 fines withdrawn) was 36% higher than the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (1,341 fines withdrawn). The number of people assisted with fines withdrawn during Q3 2025 (124 people assisted) was 51% higher than the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (82 people assisted).

The case examples in this quarterly report highlight the variety of issues customers face, from businesses not taking notice of toll invoices, to individuals encountering problems with account suspensions, not listing their vehicles on their account properly, or incorrectly using tags. In these case examples, thorough investigation confirmed that EastLink did not make an error, and customers were guided on resolving their issues or referred to the appropriate support channels.

The case examples also demonstrate my commitment to fairness and support. Where warranted, customers received clear explanations, credits, or information about payment plans and hardship assistance. My approach ensures each case is considered individually, balancing EastLink's legislation, policies, terms and conditions, with empathy and transparency throughout the resolution process.

If you are experiencing financial hardship and are seeking assistance in relation to any EastLink debt, please email hardship@connecteast.com.au or phone EastLink's customer services team in Melbourne on (03) 9955 1400 during business hours Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

For more information about EastLink's hardship policy (which outlines available options and how to request hardship assistance), visit www.eastlink.com.au/hardship.

For more information about the role of the EastLink Customer Advocate, visit www.eastlink.com.au/customeradvocate.

Doug Spencer-Roy
EastLink Customer Advocate



2. CUSTOMER ADVOCATE CASES DURING THE QUARTER

2.1 CASES RAISED

Most of the cases raised during Q3 2025 related to the following:

- > Toll invoices (65%)

Table 1: ECA cases raised

ECA CASES RAISED	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Q3 2025
Toll invoice	5	5	10	20
Toll invoice communications	1	0	1	2
Account charge	1	0	2	3
Account charge for a sold vehicle	2	0	0	2
Tags	1	0	0	1
Trip pass	0	1	0	1
Hardship assistance	1	1	0	2
Infringements (fines)	0	1	1	2
Litter	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	11	9	14	34

2.2 CASES CLOSED

All of the cases raised during Q3 2025 have been closed. The last of these cases to close was received on 23/9/2025, investigated and closed on 1/10/2025, with the customer notified of the ECA's finding on the same day.

Table 2: ECA cases closed

ECA CASES CLOSED	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Q3 2025
Q1 2025 cases closed (as at date of report)	11	9	14	34
Q1 2025 cases still open (as at date of report)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	11	9	14	34

2.3 CASE FINDINGS

In 12% of cases during Q3 2025, although EastLink was not at fault and there was no valid complaint, the ECA arranged for EastLink's customer service team to assist the customer with their predicament via expedited service.

12% of cases in the quarter were fully upheld, and a further 32% of cases were partially upheld.

In 44% of cases the complaint was rejected with no practical customer service assistance identifiable.

No customers were referred to another tollway operator or other body.

Table 3: ECA case findings

ECA CASE FINDINGS	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Q3 2025
Service expedited (no valid complaint)	1	1	2	4
Complaint upheld	1	2	1	4
Complaint partially upheld	5	2	4	11
Complaint rejected	4	4	7	15
Referred to another tollway operator etc.	0	0	0	0
Insufficient details provided	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	11	9	14	34

Most cases involved complaints about modest sums – in particular, the fee component of a toll invoice but not the toll component, or the image processing fee component but not the toll component. In general, it is usually not the trip or toll that is disputed, but whether the trip is able to be charged to a valid account or pass, or if the trip is subject to additional fees such as the toll invoice fee or image processing fee.

This means that the refunds and credits awarded can vary significantly from month to month, depending on whether there are any of the more unusual, higher value cases during the month, and whether those complaints are upheld or rejected.

Table 4: ECA case findings – refunds & credits

ECA CASE FINDINGS – REFUNDS & CREDITS	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Q3 2025
Refunds & credits awarded	\$74	\$22	\$271	\$367

2.4 ELAPSED TIME TO CLOSE CASES

The average elapsed time to close ECA cases during the quarter was 2.7 calendar days. This elapsed time metric (calendar days) includes days on weekends and public holidays, and is synonymous with customer wait time.

Table 5: Elapsed time to close ECA cases

ELAPSED TIME TO CLOSE ECA CASES	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Q3 2025
Average time to close cases (calendar days)	1.9	2.7	3.4	2.7

Case Study – vehicle on a tow truck while travelling on EastLink

The Customer's EastLink account was charged for a trip on EastLink (EastLink tag detected).

The Customer contacted EastLink's customer service team to dispute the trip on the basis that the vehicle was on a tow truck while travelling on EastLink.

However, the Customer was unwilling or unable to provide a copy of the towing receipt as requested by EastLink's customer service team.

The ECA asked EastLink's IT team to try to find evidence of the vehicle on a tow truck.

EastLink's IT team found an image which clearly showed the Customer's car on a tow truck, with right location, date and time.

This image was not available to EastLink's customer service team.

The toll that was charged to the EastLink account was credited.

3. CUSTOMER ADVOCATE CASE TRENDS

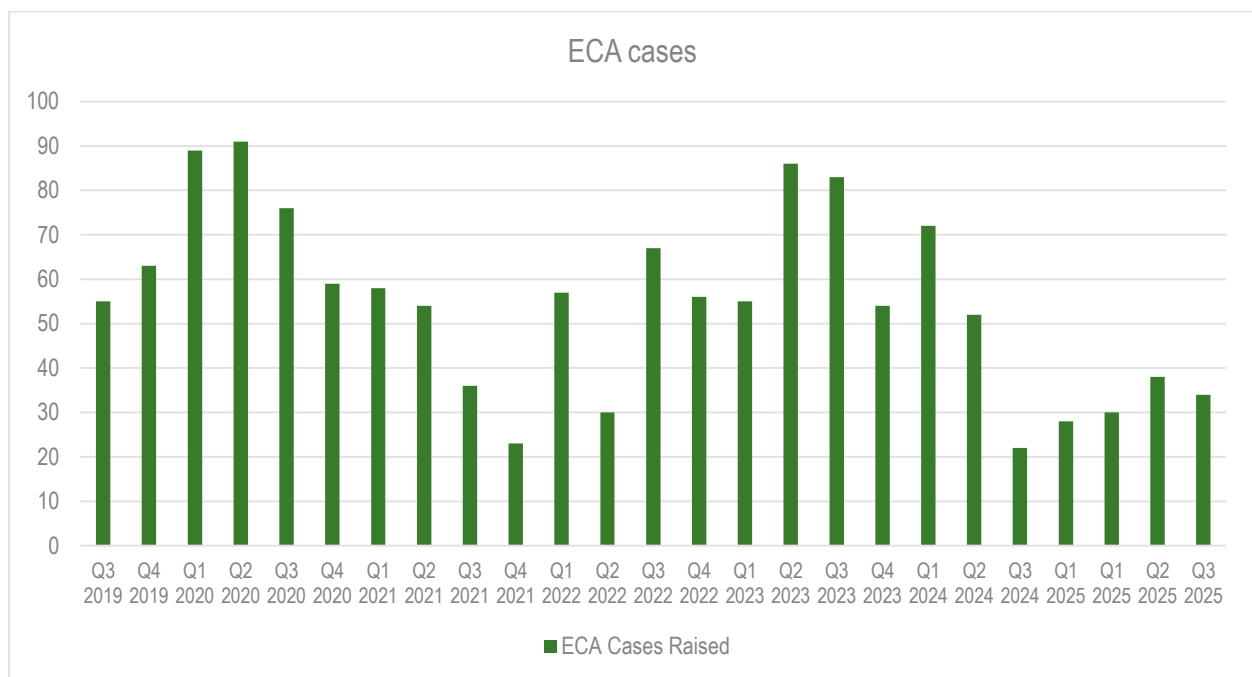
3.1 HISTORICAL TRENDS

Chart 1 shows the number of cases raised in each quarter since the commencement of the ECA role at the start of Q3 2019.

The chart shows a wave of additional cases during the first half of 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic first emerged and impacted the economy. More recent waves in the middle quarters of 2023 and in Q1 2024 are attributed to increases in cost of living pressures. The chart also indicates that the nominal case rate is in the 50 to 60 cases per quarter range.

For the fifth consecutive quarter, the number of cases raised in Q3 2025 (34 cases) was much lower than the nominal case rate (50-60 cases per quarter). The trend from Q3 2024 to Q2 2025 which suggested a return towards the nominal case rate has been reversed in Q3 2025.

Chart 1: ECA cases trend



65% of the cases raised during Q3 2025 related to toll invoices, which is higher than the longer term average for this case type over the preceding seven quarters (54%) – see Table 6.

However, there is no indication of a specific or systemic customer service failure contributing to this increase. Of the 22 cases raised in relation to toll invoices during Q3 2025, there was a broad range of outcomes:

- > 1 of these toll invoice cases were of finding type “complaint upheld”
- > 7 of these toll invoice cases were of finding type “complaint partially upheld”
- > 2 of these toll invoice cases were of finding type “service expedited (no valid complaint)”
- > 12 of these toll invoice cases were of finding type “complaint rejected”

Table 6: ECA cases trend

ECA CASES	2023	2024				2025		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Toll invoice	31	39	15	10	18	22	19	20
Toll invoice communications	0	0	1	1	0	1	3	2
Toll invoice payment	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0
Account notice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Account payment	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Account charge	5	2	2	4	3	1	3	3
Account charge for a sold vehicle	1	1	6	2	1	1	1	2
Account charge for stolen plates/vehicle etc	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Account charge for an LPN error	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Account suspension	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Account closure	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Deceased account	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tags	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Tolls	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tolling class	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trip pass	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Debt recovery	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Customer service	4	8	12	1	0	0	0	0
Payment options	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Website	3	4	2	1	1	2	1	0
Hardship assistance	1	0	3	1	1	0	3	2
Payment plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Third party scam	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
Infringements (fines)	1	3	2	0	0	1	3	2
Incident response	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Debris damage	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Abandoned vehicle	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Road maintenance	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Signage	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Litter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Noise	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speed limit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Graffiti	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Landscaping, public artworks	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
EastLink Trail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wildlife	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Privacy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown (withdrawn, insufficient details)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Police enquiry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CCTV request	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance claim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	54	72	52	22	28	30	38	34

As outlined earlier in section 3.1, the number of cases in Q3 2025 (34 cases) was much lower than the nominal case rate (50-60 cases per quarter). The trend from Q3 2024 to Q2 2025 which suggested a return towards the nominal case rate has been reversed in Q3 2025.

The distribution of these cases across each category of case findings indicates a relatively high proportion of rejections in Q2 and Q3 2025 compared to previous quarters – see Table 7. This is not believed to be the result of a systemic issue.

Table 7: ECA case findings trend

ECA CASE FINDINGS	2023	2024				2025		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Service expedited (no valid complaint)	18	31	27	8	12	10	11	4
Complaint upheld	9	13	7	6	7	8	7	4
Complaint partially upheld	14	14	9	4	3	8	4	11
Complaint rejected	11	14	6	4	5	4	13	15
Referred to another tollway operator etc.	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
Insufficient details provided	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
TOTAL	54	72	52	22	28	30	38	34

The total amount of refunds and credits during Q3 2025 (\$367) was less than half of the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (\$907) – see Table 8.

The mean average refund/credit per case during Q3 2025 (\$11) was less than half of the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (\$25).

Table 8: ECA case findings – refunds & credits trend

ECA CASES – REFUNDS & CREDITS	2023	2024				2025		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Refunds & credits awarded	\$1,619	\$1,307	\$1,492	\$905	\$1,035	\$1,085	\$527	\$367
Mean average per case (all cases)	\$30	\$18	\$29	\$41	\$37	\$36	\$14	\$11

The elapsed time to close ECA cases during Q3 2025 (2.7 calendar days) was slightly higher than the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (2.5 calendar days) – see Table 9.

Two cases in Q3 2025 took a relatively long time to close (both taking 13 calendar days):

- > In the first of these cases, the delay was attributed to waiting for another tollway operator to confirm tolling account suspensions.
- > In the second of these cases, the delay was attributed to collation of all the necessary information and documentation of the finding.

Excluding these two cases, the average time to close ECA cases during Q3 2025 would fall to just 2.1 calendar days.

Table 9: Elapsed time to close ECA cases trend

ELAPSED TIME TO CLOSE ECA CASES	2023	2024				2025		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Average time to close cases (calendar days)	2.5	2.8	2.1	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.7

4. HARSHIP ASSISTANCE

This is a recently introduced section within the ECA quarterly report, introduced for the first time in Q4 2024.

This section includes hardship assistance data that is sourced from EastLink's hardship team, who administer EastLink's hardship assistance programs.

4.1 PAYMENT PLANS

The number of payment plans created during Q3 2025 (1,373 plans created) was 20% higher than the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (1,140 plans created), and was the highest number recorded in any quarter – see Table 10.

The average value of payment plan created during Q3 2025 (\$312) was 10% higher than the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (\$284).

Table 10: Payment plans created

PAYMENT PLANS CREATED	2023	2024				2025		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Payment plans created	885	1,178	1,169	1,107	1,076	1,216	1,346	1,373
Total value of plans created	\$204,248	\$283,100	\$310,302	\$367,300	\$325,471	\$417,163	\$367,104	\$428,079
Average value of plan created	\$231	\$240	\$265	\$332	\$302	\$343	\$273	\$312

4.2 FINES WITHDRAWN DUE TO FINANCIAL HARSHIP

Fines for unpaid EastLink tolls are issued by Victoria Police and administered by Fines Victoria.

For a single vehicle, a maximum of one EastLink fine can be issued per seven day consecutive period.

In cases of financial hardship, EastLink can request withdrawal of EastLink fines.

The number of fines withdrawn by EastLink due to hardship during Q3 2025 (1,827 fines withdrawn) was 36% higher than the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (1,341 fines withdrawn), although within the normal range of variation – see Table 11.

The number of people assisted with fines withdrawn during Q3 2025 (124 people assisted) was 51% higher than the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (82 people assisted), although within the normal range of variation.

The average number of fines withdrawn per person during Q3 2025 (15 fines withdrawn per person) was the same as the longer term average over the preceding seven quarters (15 fines withdrawn per person).

Table 11: EastLink fines withdrawn due to hardship

FINES WITHDRAWN DUE TO HARSHIP	2023	2024				2025		
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Fines withdrawn	898	528	963	3,813	825	935	1,424	1,827
Individual people assisted	55	53	91	132	59	81	106	124
Average fines withdrawn per person	16	10	11	29	14	12	13	15

5. CUSTOMER ADVOCATE CASE EXAMPLES

This section only shows a very brief summary of each case example. The detailed circumstances of every case are unique, so these case examples should not be read as precedents for other cases.

5.1 CUSTOMER A (BUSINESS IGNORED TOLL INVOICES AND OVERDUE NOTICES)

Customer A complained that trips had not been charged to their tolling account. Customer A thought that their tolling account's vehicle details would be automatically updated when a vehicle's licence plate number was changed with the state registration authority.

Customer A has an EastLink account.

Customer A is a business. Customer A's vehicle travelled many times on EastLink over a period of approximately six months, without the vehicle being listed on a tolling account, without a tag and without purchase of EastLink trip passes.

Investigation revealed that 27 EastLink toll invoices and 22 EastLink overdue notices were issued by post to Customer A. However, there were no payments received from Customer A. EastLink referred the unpaid debt to its debt collection agency.

There was no error by EastLink and no justification for waiving invoice fees. Customer A was advised to contact the debt collection agency to arrange payment.

5.2 CUSTOMER B (VEHICLE NOT ON TOLLING ACCOUNT & TAG NOT INSTALLED CORRECTLY)

Customer B complained that a toll invoice had been issued despite having a tolling account.

Customer C has a tolling account issued by another tollway operator

Investigation revealed that Customer B's vehicle made two journeys on EastLink on the same day. There was a tolling tag issued by another tollway operator in the vehicle somewhere (but images indicated the tag was not installed correctly on the windscreen). Furthermore, the vehicle was not listed on Customer B's tolling account.

During the first journey, no tag was detected and three toll points were charged to an EastLink toll invoice (as the vehicle was not listed on Customer B's tolling account).

During the second journey, a tag was detected at two of nine toll points. Accordingly, 2 toll points were charged to Customer B's tolling account, while the other 7 toll points were charged to the same EastLink toll invoice as the first journey.

The EastLink toll invoice was not paid, resulting in an EastLink overdue notice being issued.

There was no error by EastLink.

The vehicle was added to Customer B's tolling account within the week following the issuing of the original EastLink toll invoice, so the underlying error was corrected by Customer B even before the EastLink overdue notice was issued. As a gesture of goodwill, the additional amount of the overdue notice compared with the original toll invoice was waived.

5.3 CUSTOMER C (TOLLING ACCOUNT FREQUENTLY SUSPENDED)

Customer C complained that toll invoices and fines had been issued despite having a tolling account.

Customer C is a business. Customer C has a tolling account issued by another tollway operator.

Investigation revealed that Customer C's tolling account had been suspended 19 times over the past 3 years (confirmed by the tollway operator that issued the account).

During these suspension periods, Customer C's two vehicles made 212 trips on EastLink.

EastLink had issued 59 EastLink toll invoices and 53 EastLink overdue notices by post to Customer C.

However, there were no payments received from Customer C. EastLink referred some unpaid trips to Victoria Police / Fines Victoria for potential infringement. EastLink referred the unpaid debt to its debt collection agency.

There was no error by EastLink and no justification for waiving invoice fees. Customer C was advised to contact the debt collection agency to arrange payment. Customer C was advised to contact FV for assistance with fines.

5.4 CUSTOMER D (TOLLING ACCOUNT SUSPENDED & SYSTEM ERROR CLAIMED)

Customer D complained that toll invoices had been issued despite having a tolling account, and that the EastLink system had made an error.

Customer D has a tolling account issued by another tollway operator.

Investigation revealed that Customer D's tolling account was suspended for more than two weeks (confirmed by the tollway operator that issued the account, including the issuing of suspension-related notifications to Customer D).

Customer D's vehicle made 5 trips on EastLink. EastLink had issued 2 EastLink toll invoices and 2 x EastLink overdue notices by post to Customer D.

However, there were no payments received from Customer D.

There was no error by EastLink. Customer D was advised to pay the 2 EastLink overdue notices to EastLink.

5.5 CUSTOMER E (VEHICLE TEMPORARILY REMOVED FROM AN ACCOUNT)

Customer E complained that trips had not been charged to their tolling account.

Customer E has a tolling account issued by another tollway operator.

Investigation revealed that Customer E's vehicle was removed from the tolling account via the other tollway operator's website, and nearly 6 months later the vehicle was added back on to the tolling account (confirmed by the tollway operator – the tollway operator also confirmed various suspension notices were issued to the accountholder).

Customer E had previously provided their consent to EastLink to receive future EastLink invoices by email.

Customer E's vehicle made 15 trips on EastLink while the vehicle was not listed on the tolling account. No tag was detected during any these 15 trips.

EastLink issued 7 EastLink toll invoices and 7 EastLink overdue notices to Customer E by email in accordance with the consent previously provided to EastLink. EastLink also issued 28 reminders to Customer E by email and SMS text message.

However, there were no payments received from Customer D. EastLink referred some unpaid trips to Victoria Police / Fines Victoria for potential infringement.

There was no error by EastLink. Customer E was advised to pay the remaining debt to EastLink. Customer E was advised to contact FV for assistance with fines.

Information was also provided to Customer E about how to arrange a payment plan or apply for hardship assistance.

For further information:

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www.eastlink.com.au/customeradvocate

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