

# 'Nightmare' start for iPhone 4's latest launch

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Customers (below) inspect the new Apple iPhone 4 at the main Apple city store in Sydney. As well as Sydney the latest iPhone also goes on sale in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Hundreds of New Zealand customers were turned away empty-handed Friday as the second phase of the Apple iPhone 4's global launch in Asian and European nations got off to a "nightmare" start.

The iconic US company has sold more than three million of the advanced smartphones since it was launched a month ago in the United States and other top markets -- but it has also been besieged by complaints over poor reception.

Sales were officially expanding on Friday to Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden and

Switzerland.

But in New Zealand, Apple fans waiting outside shops, some since dawn, were left frustrated when the launch was mysteriously pushed back until the afternoon.

Customers formed new queues several hours later, but were told that only Vodafone account-holders could buy the smartphone due to a lack of availability.

One prospective buyer called the launch an "epic fail", while another described it as a "nightmare".

"It's been terribly handled. Vodafone is blaming Apple, Apple is blaming Vodafone. No one seems to know what is going on," Jacob Creech, from Wellington, told the Stuff website ([www.stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz)).

"I'm going to get my phone and then terminate the contract straight away."

It is the second hiccup for Apple in New Zealand after the launch of its iPad, when the company was criticised for refusing to reveal where the tablet computer would be available.

Australian customers waited in the rain in central Sydney before the gadget went on sale at midnight, while long queues marshalled by security guards were seen outside shops in the morning.

Computer science student Sam Dunster, 19, waited outside one outlet from 2:00 am on Thursday, while other diehard fans huddled outside the nearby Apple store overnight for its 8:00 am opening.

"I came early because I thought there would be more of a queue,"

Dunster told the Sydney Morning Herald.

Heavy rain also failed to discourage customers in Sweden, where the phone went on sale at midnight local time.

Hundreds queued outside shops in Gothenburg, while in the southeastern town of Boraas two people had been in line since Wednesday, waiting for 37 hours on chairs that they had brought.

In Vienna, around 200 people queued from midnight in front of the T-Mobile shop in the centre of the Austrian capital, with a few having arrived 12 hours before.

The operator said its entire stock had already sold out, while Orange, the only other company to offer the new gadget in Austria, had only a few on sale with 4,000 people having already ordered online.

The phone has already caused problems for Apple because of problems with its antenna which causes reception problems when held a certain way, dubbed the "death grip". Apple has offered free cases to fix the issue.

Details of the device -- which boasts video chat, high-definition video and sharper screen resolution -- were leaked before the initial launch after technology website Gizmodo claimed an Apple employee left a prototype at a bar.

The original iPhone launched in 2007 brought smartphones to the masses. Apple has sold more than 50 million of the handsets in the past three years.

And despite a more crowded market, the latest version has already sold robustly since the initial launch in Britain, France, Germany, Japan and

the United States late last month.

The new iPhone and iPad propelled California-based Apple to a record profit of 3.25 billion US dollars in the June quarter, a rise of 78 percent.

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