

Apple Maps glitch could be deadly, Australian police says (Update)

December 10 2012, by Madeleine Coorey

Australian police Monday warned motorists about using Apple Maps on the iPhone's latest operating system after rescuing several people left stranded in the wilderness, saying the errors could prove deadly.

Victoria state police said drivers were sent "off the beaten track" in recent weeks while attempting to get to the inland town of Mildura, being directed instead to the middle of a national park.

"Police are extremely concerned as there is no water supply within the park and temperatures can reach as high as 46 degrees Celsius (114 F), making this a potentially life threatening issue," police said in a statement.

Authorities said tests on the mapping system had confirmed that it lists Mildura, around 500 kilometres (310 miles) northwest of Melbourne, as being in the heart of the Murray Sunset National Park.

This is about 70 kilometres (43 miles) from its actual location.

"If it was a 45-degree day, someone could actually die," Mildura's Local Area Commander Inspector Simon Clemence told state broadcaster ABC.

"It's quite a dangerous situation, so we would be calling for people not to use the new Apple iPhone mapping system if they're travelling from South Australia to Mildura."

Police said at least five vehicles had become stranded in the park after drivers followed directions on their Apple iPhones, some of them after being stranded for up to 24 hours without food or water.

"One guy got far enough in to lose phone coverage and he was stuck there and he got bogged and he had to walk out and it took him 24 hours to get to a point where he had phone coverage and then we came and rescued him," Clemence said.

"This is a direct result of this map application," he said, the Melbourne Herald-Sun newspaper reported.

Mobile telephone reception is often patchy in country areas of the vast Australian continent and Clemence warned with the heat of full summer yet to hit, travellers should be wary of relying too heavily on their mobile phones.

Apple would not comment on the Mildura problem, but referred to an earlier statement that it was doing everything it could to fix problems with the maps application in the new operating system used by the iPhone 5.

In a statement in September, Apple chief executive Tim Cook said the company was striving to make "world-class products that deliver the best experience possible to our customers".

"With the launch of our new Maps last week, we fell short on this commitment," he said.

"We are extremely sorry for the frustration this has caused our customers and we are doing everything we can to make Maps better."

The US firm developed its own mapping programme included in its new

mobile iOS 6 operating system, and in doing so booted off Google Maps, which had been the default programme for Apple devices.

But the new system immediately drew scorn for omitting key landmarks and cities, failing to identify correct locations and distorting views from its images.

Victoria police said they had contacted Apple about the problem and they hoped it could be rectified promptly. In the meantime, they asked motorists in the state to rely on other forms of mapping.

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: Apple Maps glitch could be deadly, Australian police says (Update) (2012, December 10) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-12-apple-glitch-deadly-australian-police.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.