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Queues form in Sydney for iPhone 4S



iPhone 4S buyers Tom Mosca, Will Batterham, Beau Giles and Jack Lul outside Apple's Sydney CBD store. Picture: Alan Pryke
Source: The Australian

QUEUING for the new iPhone 4S outside Apple's flagship store in Sydney has started slowly, with just five diehard iPhone users in line, 24 hours before the smartphone goes on sale.

Unsettling Sydney weather and coldish nights, and the simultaneous availability of the iPhone at 8am local time at dozens of Telstra, Optus and Vodafone stores, other Apple stores and retail outlets may have tempered the length of the George Street queue at this time.

This could, of course, change quickly as the countdown continues.

Those in line mostly have the prevailing iPhone 4 and have already sold, or are about to sell, their old iPhone 4 to get Apple's latest model.

First-in-line Tom Mosca, a veteran having been among the first people queuing for the iPad 2 early this year, is spending some of his birthday money.

Mr Mosca, a year 10 student, has been queuing since 10.30 am on Tuesday. He said he sold his iPhone 4 for \$550.

"I like the new (8 megapixel) camera and the Siri (voice recognition) feature," he said. "I really intend to see if it does what they say it will do."

Mr Mosca said his school – which he would not name – supported his queuing activities.

"A lot of my teachers know I do this and support me, but I've got a fair bit of homework," he said.

Number three in line, Beau Giles, an HSC student at Randwick TAFE, also admitted being lured to the iPhone 4S by the Siri voice recognition/command system.

"It's more like talking to a person," he said.

Apple's Sydney launch has been subject to a little opposition this time around, with a store dedicated to the rival Galaxy SII smartphone springing up on Monday. It's just two doors down in Sydney's busy George Street.

Separating the two stores is a McDonald's – a piece of neutral territory between Apple and Samsung, who are locked in Federal Court litigation over alleged patent breaches involving Samsung's Galaxy Tab 10.1 tablet computer.

Galaxy SII store manager Ben Lovelace said he was employed by an events company to operate the store which will close on Sunday – just a week after it opened.

In the past days, Samsung managed to cultivate queuing of its own by offering 10 Galaxy SII smartphones each morning for \$2 each. They are however locked to Vodafone.

Queuers told The Australian some 47 people had lined up by Tuesday.

Alison Nguyen said queuing had been uncomfortable and the group had experienced a brush with city rangers.

"We brought chairs and a tent," she said. "The city rangers told us we were obstructing the way so we had to sleep in the open."

Not all queuing in the Samsung line were motivated by wanting to own the phone.

John Kim and Jessica Kim, both of whom obtained \$2 phones today, said they planned to sell them to finance a holiday. The Samsung Galaxy SII currently retails for \$849 outright.

John Kim said he would hold on to his current iPhone 4, while Jessica Kim said she was happy with her Optus My Tab tablet.

Those in both Apple and Samsung queues said they had enjoyed friendly discussions with the rival queuers about phones, technology, and weather conditions.

With only five in the Apple queue, the pragmatic Mr Giles said he was "kicking himself" he hadn't first joined the Samsung queue, as he could have acquired and sold a Galaxy SII and still have had time to join the Apple queue.