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## Three releases iPhone 3GS pricing - so who's got the best iPhone deal?

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Patrick Stafford



After a long wait for Apple iPhone fans, Three finally released pricing details for the new iPhone 3GS device late last night, with plans ranging from as low as \$39 per month to over \$100 for 500 text messages and 3GB of data.

The carrier also surprised the industry by allowing existing Three customers to upgrade to the iPhone without having to change their rate plan or break their existing contract.

The announcement now means five brands will offer the phone in Australia. Customers are better off than their US counterparts, where users can only purchase the iPhone on contracts with AT&T.

Warren Chaisatien, managing director of analyst firm Telsyte, says Three's prices are expectedly "quite aggressive" and says the option for existing customers to upgrade to the iPhone without breaking contract is "a good move".

"Three are the most attractive, and most aggressive in terms of pricing which has been their legacy for a long time now. Certainly this will potentially force the bigger competitors, particularly Telstra and Optus to become more competitive."

"When it comes to those who are migrating from regular phones and adopting a smartphone for the first time, previously there was nothing to offer these people. With these new prices, the iPhone will become even more popular."

With so many options to choose from, here is a guide on how to determine which iPhone 3GS plan is best for you.

### Three

It has been a long wait for Three customers, as the carrier announced it would launch the iPhone on July 17 last month, but did not release pricing along with the other telcos. Last night's announcement was a welcomed one, but it is existing Three customers who will gain the most out of the brand's deals.

Three offers the iPhone 3GS on a \$39, \$49 or \$79 cap, offering 150MB, 250MB and 1GB of data respectively. Customers on the \$39 cap will need to pay \$18 per month for the 16GB version and \$24 for the 32GB version, while users on the \$49 cap will need to pay \$14 per month for the 16GB and \$18 per month for the 32GB version.

There is no handset fee for consumers on the \$79 cap using the 16GB version, but the 32GB model will cost \$10 per month.

An additional plan, entitled 'The Works', will offer 3,000 minutes of calls, 500 SMS/MMS messages and 3GB of data for \$110 per month, with an additional \$5 required if users want to the 32GB iPhone model.

As a bonus, Three have offered an extra 500MB of data for users on the \$49 cap, bringing the total amount of data available on that plan to 750MB.

Extra data is also available, with \$6 per month for 500MB, \$10 for 1GB and \$20 for 3GB. The phone will also be available on a prepaid basis, with the 16GB and 32GB versions costing \$929 and \$1,129 respectively.

But the best deals are only available to existing Three customers.

The carrier announced that existing customers can upgrade to the iPhone 3GS device, without any need to change their existing rate plan or break their contract.

Existing customers will need to pay an extra \$40 per month on top of their normal rate plan for the 16GB version of the device, and an extra \$45 for the 32GB version, with 1GB of data included in both packs.

This means a user will pay \$1,080 over 24 months for the 32GB iPhone 3GS - just \$40 extra than buying an unlocked iPhone 3GS from Apple's official store.

This means that a user currently on a \$29 cap wanting to buy the 16GB iPhone 3GS will pay \$69 per month for the handset and 1GB of data. But those users on higher end deals, such as the \$69 or \$79 caps, will end up paying higher

amounts for the same amount of data which may prompt them to switch to the brand's 'The Works' plan.

True to Three's reputation as a low-cost alternative, it is the existing lower end users of the brand that will benefit the most when looking to upgrade to the device.

### Vodafone

VHA's second brand, Vodafone, is offering the iPhone 3GS on \$59, \$69, \$79 and \$99 caps, with an unlimited plan costing \$114.

The \$59 cap includes 500MB of data, with the \$69, \$79 and \$99 caps included with 1GB of data. The \$114 unlimited plan comes with 2GB of data, with no additional handset payments.

For the 16GB version, only customers on the \$59 will need to pay a handset fee of \$10 per month or \$240 up front. For the 32GB version, those on the \$59 and \$69 caps will need to pay \$15 per month or \$360 up front.

Customers on the \$79 cap will need to pay \$10 per month or \$240 up front, while those on the \$99 cap will need to pay an extra \$5 per month or \$120 up front.

Tethering is allowed for free, along with visual voicemail, while extra data is available at \$9.95 per month for an extra 200MB.

### Optus

Optus takes the prize for offering the lowest priced cap for the iPhone 3GS, a \$19 per month plan, but also charges slightly higher handset fees for customers on higher plans as well.

The iPhone 3GS is available on \$19, \$49, \$59 and \$79 caps, and also on two 'Timeless' plans costing \$99 and \$129 each for unlimited calls and SMS messages. It is these two plans that Optus offers as the preferred contracts, with each including 1.5GB and 3GB of data respectively.

The Optus plans carry heavy handset fees for each plan:

Plan	32GB - 12 month plan	32GB - 24 month plan	Data
\$19	\$76 per month	\$34 per month	100MB
\$49	\$62 per month	\$19 per month	250MB
\$59	\$57 per month	\$14 per month	700MB
\$79	\$52 per month	\$10 per month	1GB
<b>Timeless \$99</b>	\$48 per month	\$0 per month	1.5GB
<b>Timeless \$129</b>	\$48 per month	\$0 per month	3GB
Plan	16GB - 12 month plan	16GB - 24 month plan	Data
\$19	\$63 per month	\$27 per month	100MB
\$49	\$49 per month	\$13 per month	250MB
\$59	\$44 per month	\$8 per month	700MB
\$79	\$39 per month	\$0 per month	1GB
<b>Timeless \$99</b>	\$34 per month	\$0 per month	1.5GB
<b>Timeless \$129</b>	\$34 per month	\$0 per month	3GB

Extra data is also available for \$4.95 per month for 25 MB, \$9.99 for 200MB, \$14.99 for 500MB and \$19.99 for 1GB, although each plan will carry enough data for most day-to-day tasks.

Unfortunately, tethering will cost customers \$9.99 per month, with visual voicemail not offered at all.

### Virgin

Virgin Mobile offers the iPhone 3GS on \$20, \$29, \$45, \$70, \$75, \$95 and \$100 caps. But despite the wide range of plans available, Virgin comes up short on data plans.

The \$20 comes with 5MB, the \$29 with 20MB, the \$45 with 50MB and the \$70 with 1GB. The \$75 and \$95 plans offer 50MB, while the \$100 plan offers a whopping 5GB of data. Unlike other carriers, Virgin only offers 1GB when customers spend at least \$70 on a plan, before any handset costs are added.

Handset prices for the caps range from \$22 per month on the \$20 plan to \$8 per month for the \$100 plan.

## Telstra

Telstra is the most expensive of the carriers offering the iPhone 3GS, with the company itself saying the device is not one the products it chooses to heavily promote.

The device is available on the \$49, \$79, \$99 and \$129 caps, with the handset priced from \$199 to \$549 upfront - no monthly payment plans are available. Additionally, these plans come with no data packs, which must be purchased separately, starting from \$5 per month for 5MB and ranging to \$119 per month for 5GB.

Value is slightly better on the company's plans, ranging from \$30 per month to \$250. The \$30 and \$40 plans come with just 2.5MB, while the \$60, \$80 and \$100 plans come with 5MB. The \$150 and \$250 plans offer just 7.5MB of data, but require no upfront costs.

The \$30 to \$80 plans require a minimum \$49 upfront cost for the 16GB model, and a minimum \$199 GB for the 32GB version.

But with the telco offering neither tethering nor visual voicemail, diehard iPhone fans would perhaps do better to look elsewhere.

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