Dear Ms Smart

I am writing to complain about the reporting of a recent case of suicide in Alpha News, 14 October, on page 2. The report titled ‘Eighties Rock Star Finds Peace at Last’, gave a detailed account of the suicide location and the method used by the rock star.

As the Australian Government guidelines, Reporting Mental Illness and Suicide, state, disclosing details in regards to suicide method, or location, may lead to ‘copycat’ attempts by people who are vulnerable, or may ‘normalise’ suicidal behaviour.

As a regular reader I would appreciate it if Alpha News can report on suicide more thoughtfully in the future, taking note of these recommendations that encourage media outlets to ensure ‘the method of suicide is not described in detail, displayed, photographed, or given prominence. If it is important to the story, discuss the method and location in general terms only’.

For a copy of Reporting Mental Illness and Suicide you can visit the Mindframe website at – www.mindframe-media.info. You may also be interested to visit www.sane.org - the website of SANE Australia, the mental health charity – that offers straightforward information on suicide and mental illness, as well as research and advice for media professionals through the SANE Media Centre.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Ron Costa