This presentation will describe three studies that examined the nature and impact of Australian media reports of Robin Williams’ suicide. Collectively, these studies showed that local newspaper reporting of Robin Williams’ suicide was largely consistent with Australia’s Mindframe guidelines. Despite this, there were increases in suicides in the immediate aftermath of his death, which is obviously a negative outcome. There were also increases in calls to helplines, which may be interpreted either as negative (i.e., suggesting that people’s levels of distress and feelings of suicidality were heightened) or positive (i.e., suggesting that people who might have otherwise been influenced to harm themselves called a helpline instead).

It may be that Australians were exposed to reports that contravened safe reporting recommendations, particularly via overseas media social media and/or that some Australian reports may have had unhelpful overarching narratives, despite largely adhering to the Mindframe guidelines. The Mindframe guidelines constitute international best practice but consideration should be given to whether certain recommendations within them should be further reinforced and whether more nuanced information about how stories should be framed could be provided.