

I Safeguarding

Indigenous knowledge has often been exploited for profit without consultation with communities. Many communities are calling for the protection of their knowledge from inappropriate use, emphasising the need for free, prior and informed consent and benefit sharing.

Existing intellectual property regimes are ill-adapted to indigenous knowledge. More appropriate methods are being developed, such as *sui generis* systems based upon customary law.

Even within a community, access to knowledge may differ. Some types of knowledge, especially those considered sacred, may be restricted to certain individuals and families who fulfil particular roles in the community (e.g. shamans or midwives). There is also knowledge that the community may want to keep for themselves (e.g. locations of sacred groves and preferred harvesting areas). It is important to understand the different types of knowledge, and both the individual's and community's right to control access.



SACRED Q'IPIS (textile bundles) guide the Coroma people in managing their relations with nature.



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FOR BIDAYUH-KROKONG in Malaysia, sacred knowledge is held by 'sighted ones' in the community.



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MANY INUIT want inukshuks to be recognised as their collective intellectual property.



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