Quirky fact:
Energy sources used to generate electricity include water, wind, sun, gas diesel fuel, tidal energy, waves and geothermal energy.

Background Information
In 1891, the Bulloo Shire Council embarked on a project of drilling an artesian bore to provide Thargomindah’s town water supply. The water pressure was so strong that by 1893 it was decided to harness it as energy to drive a generating plant for the supply of electricity to the town. This formed the Thargomindah Hydro Electric Plant, a distinction that would mark it as the first town in Australia to have a hydro electricity plant and third in the world behind Paris and London to have street lighting generated by hydro power. The plant continued to supply electricity until 1951, when the Capricornia Electricity Board installed a diesel plant, which still operates today.

In the early 20th century, Queensland was characterised by isolated urban areas, separated by large distances, with the majority of townships on the coast and in the southeast. Rural properties tended to be large and pastoral service towns were small. At the turn of the century private companies supplied power to Brisbane, Charters Towers and Rockhampton.

During the following 20 years other major centres developed power stations, most of which were small thermal, diesel or gas engine driven plants. Up until the 1940s electricity generation remained largely in the hands of local government and private enterprise. However, during World War II all domestic resources were diverted into essential services and the war effort, and afterwards all of the generating authorities needed to replace and expand their generating equipment.

The provision of electricity to rural areas became a major focus of the Electricity Commission during the 1950s and increasingly thereafter, supplies were delivered by large power stations located close to their power sources, with huge transmission networks.

Indicative of its heritage, in 2002 as part of “Year of the Outback” celebrations, Thargomindah implemented two state-of-the-art renewable energy schemes that would place the town at the forefront of Australia’s 21st century power generation.
Inquiry Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>How did features of the environment, including bore water, influence places like Thargomindah?</td>
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<td>7/8</td>
<td>How was the Great Artesian Basin formed?</td>
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<td>Compare the Outback’s water resources, and the way they are managed, to those of a different country.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>What scientific understandings were used to generate electricity?</td>
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<td>7/8</td>
<td>How do science understandings help people make effective use of available energy sources?</td>
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</tbody>
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Points of Interest

- **Hydro Power Plant**
  The Hydro Power Plant Display Shed is a replica of the original shed, which was built on the site. It houses a working Pelton Wheel, and a display of old equipment, which was originally used by the early pioneers of the region to create energy.

  Gilmour Street, Thargomindah QLD 4492
  - **Cost:** Free Entry
  - **Hours:** Daily from 8.30am to 5.00pm with a working display everyday
  - **Phone:** (07) 4655 3399
  - **Email:** thargo.info@bigpond.com.au
  - **Website:** www.thargotourism.com.au

- **Leahy House, Thargomindah**

- **Burke and Wills Dig Tree, Cameron Corner, via Thargomindah**

ADDENDUM RESOURCES

**Queensland Energy Museum**
Source: Factsheets, Teacher resources, Activities
Queensland Energy Museum Inc.
Phone: (07) 3854 1266
Email: info@energymuseum.com.au
Website: www.energymuseum.com.au

REFERENCES

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

FURTHER INFORMATION