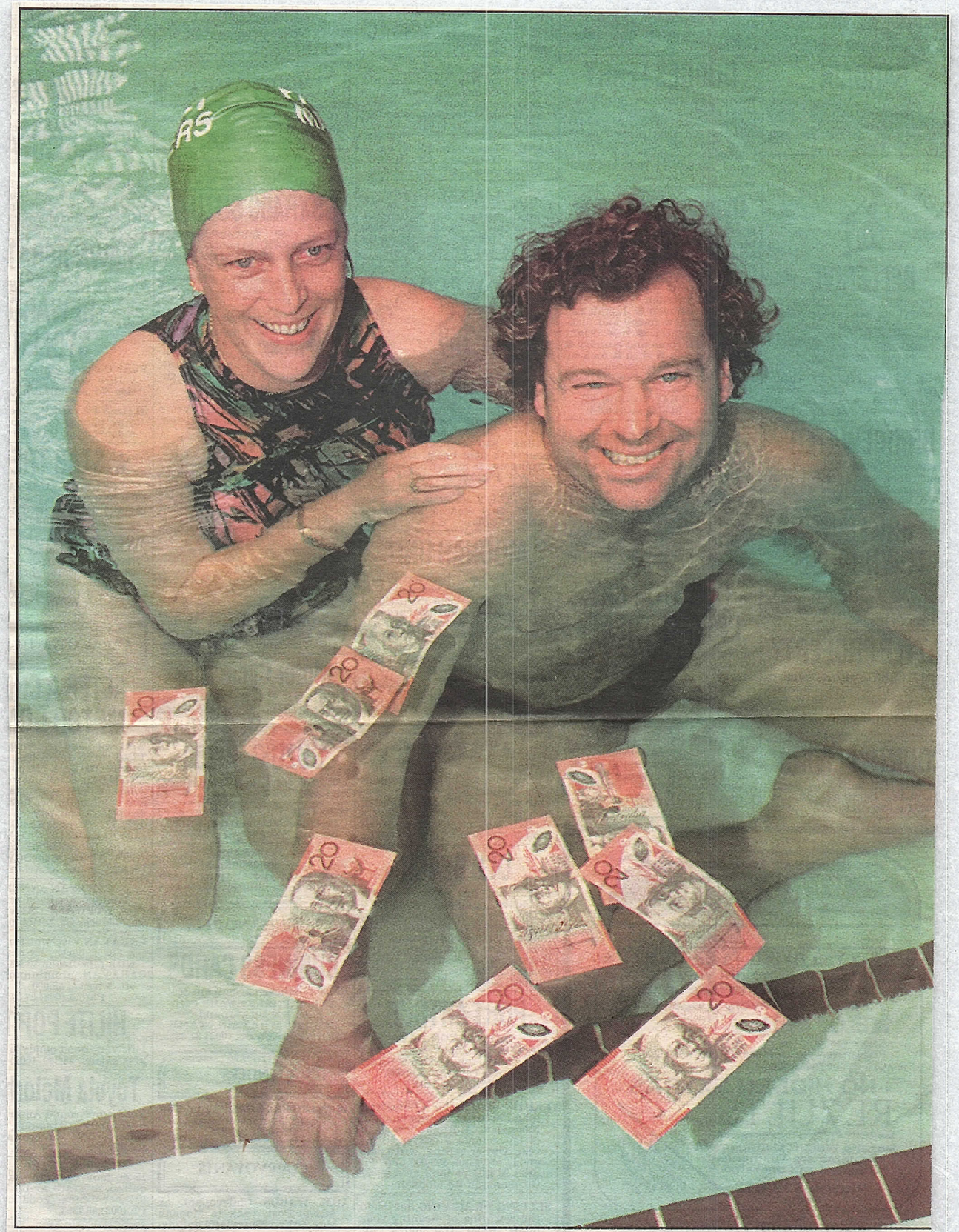

Pooling resources: Janet Phillips and Shane Branch with some of the money raised to send state representatives to the World Special Olympic Games to be held in Connecticut, US, next month. Picture: BARRY WINBURN.

The Mercury 24/5/95

All win at world special games

By MONIKA ANDERSCH

FOUR very special people from Southern Tasmania will represent Australia in various sports at world games next month.

They will compete at the World Special Olympic Games to be held in Connecticut, US, which will host 6000 athletes from 139 countries, as well as 45,000 volunteers supporting them. It will be the largest sporting competition in the world for 1995.

And of an Australian team of about 70, Tasmania is sending 13 representatives, Special Olympics Southern Tasmania spokesperson Stephen Dimsey said.

"Their selection came through the National Games in Perth in November last year and we have 13 representatives from Tasmania — 10 athletes and three coaches," he said.

"The whole team is 70 people in total, so we have a good representation."

The games are held once every four years, just like the Olympic Games, and is run along the same lines.

"They raise the Olympic flag and light the Olympic flame, so it's the same as the regular Olympiad," Mr Dimsey said.

The games are organised so everyone gets to compete fairly, at their own level, and everyone is a winner.

"The motto for the games is 'We All Win' and everyone gets to compete regardless of their level," he said.

"It's for people with an intellectual disability and anyone can compete. There are different levels to suit people of different abilities and just as much emphasis is put on second or third place."

Southern Tasmania will be sending two people to compete in the basketball, William Rogers and Tania Wright, as well as the assistant coach for men's basketball, Karen Reeve.

Also going will be swimmer Shane Branch, and he, along with the rest of the athletes, had the hard task of raising money to get to the games.

"The Hobart Masters Swimming Club raised $1800 for Shane to get on the plane to America and Janet Phillips has been one of the people instrumental in organising the fundraising events," Mr Dimsey said.

"All the athletes are doing a certain amount of fundraising."

While Shane is a relatively new representative for Australia, Tania Wright has played basketball for Australia in Greece, and William Rogers has represented Australia in soccer.

The other state representatives are: Peter Chettle (women's basketball coach), Robyn Hanson (athletics coach), Lesley Westwood (women's basketball), Kathy McCrimmon (softball), Tina Kenna (softball), Monica Barrett (softball), Gavin Sutton (athletics), Wayne Attard (athletics) and Ken Hallett (tennis).