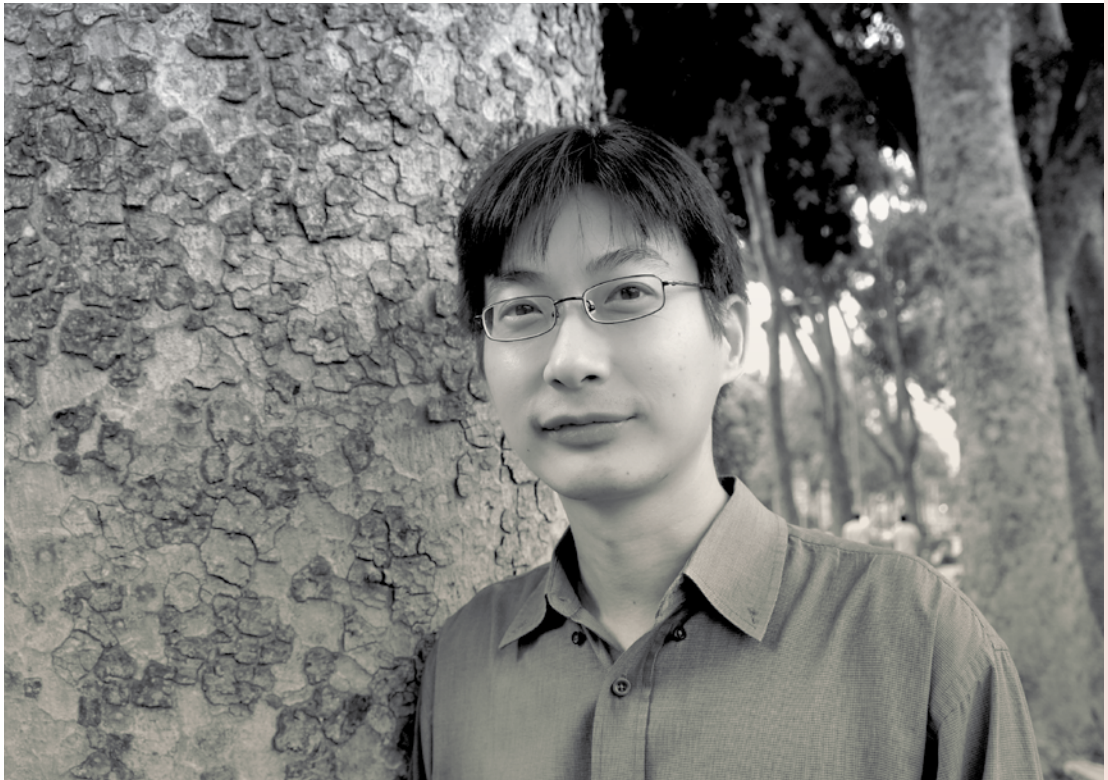




YOUNG LEADER



Eugene Tay

# Making Zero the Hero

**E**ugene Tay is the Executive Director of Zero Waste SG, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to accelerate Singapore's shift towards zero waste and the circular economy. He also runs Green Future Solutions, a sustainability consulting company that helps businesses and organisations address environmental challenges and identify green opportunities.

Eugene Tay on...

### **🗨️ Your biggest takeaway from running Zero Waste SG**

In our current linear economy of “take, make, use and throw”, waste is waste. This is no longer sustainable; we can no longer use more resources to generate more waste. What is the alternative? Imagine a future of zero waste and circular economy, where waste is not waste. Less waste is generated through re-designing, reducing, reusing, sharing, repairing, re-manufacturing, and recycling. Waste generated becomes biological nutrients to be returned safely back to the environment, or becomes technical nutrients to be returned back to the economy. From running Zero Waste SG, I have met individuals and companies that believe in the same future and are willing to work together to make it happen.

### **🗨️ An example of an innovation that inspires you**

I’m inspired by new business models in the circular economy—product service systems, product life extension, and sharing platforms. Companies have to learn to adopt innovative business models to generate revenue while satisfying customers and reducing the wastage of resources. Examples of innovative business models include providing lighting as a service instead of selling lamps; subscription payment for washing cycles rather than buying washing machines; modular smartphones that can be upgraded and extended with more functions; and business-to-business sharing of underutilised assets.

### **🗨️ The most exciting thing that you are working on now**

This year, I’m focused on reducing food waste and working on these programmes: provide more outreach and awareness talks

for businesses and schools; organise a competition with culinary schools to engage students in developing recipes for leftovers; interview food companies and develop best practices and case studies on food waste reduction and recycling; and develop food waste matching apps so that those with excess food can easily find others to give away or sell at a discount. I’m also planning to produce a brief report of the circular economy and opportunities for Singapore so that we can use it to seek out interested (and the right) parties who wish to work together on developing a more detailed city scan for Singapore and study the actual potential of the circular economy in Singapore and the material flows.

### **🗨️ A typical day in your shoes**

A typical day for me at Zero Waste SG would be working together with volunteers on planning and implementing the various programmes, attending meetings and giving talks, or liaising with potential partners and government agencies. In addition, I manage a sustainability consultancy, Green Future Solutions, so half my time is involved in providing services to clients, such as conducting environmental audits, providing talks and training workshops, or researching and developing content and reports.

### **🗨️ Your ideal city**

Amsterdam would be an ideal city as it is striving to lead as a sharing city and a circular hotspot. It is also car-lite with a strong cycling culture and good tram system. The cooperative culture and lack of hierarchy among the public, private and people sectors, and the willingness to be innovative and take risks, makes it an ideal city to lead in sustainability. ○